CELESTE,

AND

OTHER SKETCHES.

BY

P. B. RIFFE

LEBANON KY:

PRINTED AT THE STANDARD OFFICE

1876

TO THE MEMORY OF MY SON

GEORGE,

AND THE SUPPORT OF HIS FIVE LITTLE

ORPHANS,

THESE HUMBLE PAGES ARE

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

The reprint of this book was made in 1972 by Mrs. H.B. Townsend of Orrick, Mo.

Mrs. Townsend is a great grand niece of P.B. Riffe, the author of Celeste.

Riffe was born in Casey County, Kentucky, in 1807 and he died in Sedalia, Mo., in 1889. His parents were Christopher and Elizabeth (Coffey) Riffe. His grandmother was Elizabeth (Casey) Riffe whose brother, William Casey, was the great-grandfather of Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain), the famous novelist who was born in 1835 and died in 1910.

TO THE READER.

The following pages were written for neither fame nor money, nor are they now offered to the public in their present form on account of any superior literary merit the writer supposes they possess.

Happening on one occasion to relate the circumstances of the first protracted meeting in Liberty to a group of friends, among whom were W. T. Knott, Esq., of Lebanon, and Dr. Ely McClellan, Assistant Surgeon United States Army, I was urged by them to write an account of it for publication in the LEBANON STANDARD.

I did so with many misgivings as to the kind of reception it was likely to have, even at the hands of the generous and indulgent readers of that excellent paper; but was most agreeably surprised to find the unpretending sketch not only read with apparent pleasure by my own friends and neighbors, but copied with commendatory notices by other papers in different parts of the country.

A short time afterwards I had the misfortune to meet with a serious and painful accident, which I regret to say has partially disabled me for life. The other sketches in this little volume were written mainly during my convalescence, as a sort of refuge from the suffering, mental as well as physical, to which the casualty had subjected me, and published in the STANDARD with the hope that possibly they might contribute somewhat to the pleasure and amusement of those who had been kind to me in my misfortunes.

Since their appearance I have been repeatedly urged by many kind-hearted friends, who perhaps overestimate even the little merits these rude attempts at literary composition possess, to publish, them in the present shape, party to preserve them, but more especially because they thought the patronage of a generous public would enable me to realize a pittance, perhaps, from the sale of the book.

It occurred to me that possibly this might be true and I at length determined to hazard the experiment, the result of which is before you. Such is my apology for obtruding myself in this manner upon your attention. If you read the book through, insignificant as it may appear to you, I hope you will realize at

least fifty cents' worth of entertainment from its unpretending pages. If you should be disappointed on perusing it, kindly remember that an old man who makes no claim to either genius or culture has in good faith done what he could to amuse you, and if he has failed his regret is far more poignant than yours can be. P. B. R.

LEBANON, KY., September 4, 1876.

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CELESTE

CHAPTER I.

In what was then, and perhaps is still, one of the most desirable neighborhoods in our State, there lived when I was a boy a gentleman named Vanderlin. He was descended from an old and respectable family of New York; but for several generations his ancestors of that name had resided in Virginia, where by industry and prudent management they amassed considerable wealth, and took position among the most reputable people of that Commonwealth. With a handsome face and a commanding figure he combined an excellent understanding, which had been improved by the advantages of a liberal education, together with a frank and generous disposition, which displayed itself in an affable and pleasing address that readily secured him the confidence and esteem of all who knew him. When scarcely twenty-one years of age, he entered the army with the rank of Major, which had been conferred upon him by President Jefferson, who was an old and intimate friend of the family; but he was soon obliged to resign his commission in order to

wind up the large and somewhat complicated estate of his father, whose death put him in possession of a handsome patrimony, with which in the course of a year or two he removed to Kentucky, and settled upon the farm where I knew him, and where he continued to reside during the remainder of his life.

In nothing, however, was fortune more liberal to Major Vanderlin than in bestowing upon him the hand and heart of his lovely and acomplished wife. She was truly a pearl above all price. I do not allude merely to her personal charms, which were of the highest type of beauty, nor to her mental embellishments, which were sufficient to have made her the ornament of the most refined community; but to the singular loveliness of her amiable, gentle, christian spirit, which seems to me yet, after the lapse of so many long and eventful years, to have been the most beautiful illustration of the chastening influences of a pure and holy religion I ever met with in my life; and I am sure that the smile of a more affectionate, devoted, trusting wife never beamed upon a prouder or a happier husband.

The union of this admirable couple was blessed by the birth of two lovely children; the first a bright-faced, sprightly, finely-developed boy, who

was christened John in memory of the Major's father, and the other a beautiful little girl who died before she was quite three years old. Their home, which till this sad event had never been visited by a shade of domestic sorrow, was the constant abode of hospitality, and as it was situated upon one of the main thoroughfares leading into Virginia, scarcely a night passed but some wayfaring stranger found shelter under its ample roof, and a welcome to its generous board.

A month or two after the death of his little daughter, it became necessary for Major Vanderlin to return to his native State, on business of importance connected with the estate of a deceased uncle, which, it was supposed, would detain him from home some eight or ten weeks. Such a thing as a railroad had not even been thought of at that day, nor so much as a stagecoach ever been seen in that part of Kentucky, if, indeed, anywhere else in the State. It is not strange, therefore, that, on the morning fixed for his departure, the Major, though usually one of the most cheerful, light-hearted men in the world, looked sad and troubled in view of the long and tedious journey which he was compelled to make, through a wild and mountainous country, on horseback and alone, and

especially when he thought of the bright scenes of love and happiness he was to leave behind him. After an early breakfast, however, he shook hands with each of his large family of faithful and affectionate slaves, who had all crowded around to bid him "good bye," kissed his little boy, clasped his weeping wife to his bosom in a long and silent embrace, and then with a swelling heart, mounted his horse and turned his face toward the home of his childhood, without trusting himself to look back upon the sorrowing group that stood watching his receding form until it was out of sight.

In the evening of the next day Mrs. Vanderlin was sitting on the front portico, with Johnny on her lap; the lengthened shadows had blended into the deepening haze of twilight; the little boy, still holding in his chubby hand the bridle of his stickhorse, had nestled his brown silky curls close to his mother's bosom and sunk into the soft sweet sleep of innocence; Maria, the colored waiting maid, who was seated on the steps, pillowed her head upon her dusky arm that lay prone upon the floor and abandoned herself to dreams; the katydids had commenced their monotonous serenade in the surrounding trees; the chatter of the younger negroes

had hushed, and the quiet conversation of the older ones, who were seated in groups about their various cabin doors, filled the air with a sort of drowsy murmur, which increased rather than disturbed the soothing, softening effect of the peaceful scene of rural repose. The shades of approaching night grew deeper and deeper upon the silent landscape, and but one single living being seemed conscious of the existence of the lonely wife as she sat looking dreamily down the road; and that was the faithful watchdog, which had seated himself at her feet, and with ears erect and wrinkled brow, was gazing thoughtfully in the direction his master had gone the day before. What was the nature of her thoughts in that quiet twilight hour the gentle loving wife who may read these lines need not be told; for what true wife has not felt her soul suffused with the same sweet sadness as she has thus looked long and fondly in the direction of her absent husband, even though an ocean may have stretched between them?

Her reverie was at length disturbed by a low suppressed bark from her fellow-watcher, which called her attention to the approaching forms of a couple of travelers, which were dimly visible through the gathering darkness. As they drew nearer, she

discerned that one of them was a woman, and when she saw them turn in towards the gate, as though they would seek entertainment for the night, she glided into her room, laid Johnny softly on the bed, and hastened out to give them a courteous and cordial welcome. When she reached the stile-blocks where the strangers sat on their horses, awaiting her approach, she found that she had been correct. The principal personage was, indeed, a woman with an infant sleeping on a pillow before her, and accompanied by a single servant, a sprightly well-dressed negro boy about fourteen years of age; and, though superbly mounted, the long-drawn sign and the drooping crests of their jaded beasts showed signs of a long and steady day's ride. Mrs. Vanderlin in her soft, sweet way, invited the lady to get down, at the same time taking the sleeping babe tenderly in her arms, and after the lady had dismounted led the way into the house, leaving "Uncle Harry," a faithful old family servant and the Major's chief lieutenant, who had made his appearance, to offer the hospitalities of the house in his master's absence, to give directions about taking care of the horses.

On reaching the family room, the kind-hearted hostess laid the baby gently by the side of little

Johnny, and turned to tender an additional welcome to her guest, whom she was surprised to find with her face buried in her hands and crying piteously. The silken cords of sympathy drew Mrs. Vanderlin instantly to her side, and placing her arms tenderly about the neck of the weeping stranger, she asked in the soft but earnest language of compassionate solicitude:

"My dear, dear sister, what grieves you so? Can I do *anything* to help you?

The poor woman wrung her hands in an agony of emotion, and in a few moments exclaimed: "Oh! what shall I do? What shall I do? Oh, my poor child! what shall I do? Oh, Madam, have pity on me, and tell me, tell me what I shall do. I have ridden all this long, long weary day, and my poor little babe is nearly worn out with fatigue. I must travel still farther yet to-night, and she cannot stand it. She will die. Oh, she will *die*! Please, *please* tell me what I shall do."

"Calm yourself, my dear," said Mrs. Vanderlin, "do *not* take on so. You are more than welcome to stay with us to-night, or as long as you wish to, and when you are both sufficiently rested, you can go on. You must not think of going farther to-night. Please

calm yourself and rest with us till morning."

"Oh, no, no, no," cried the woman in a plaintive wailing voice, "I must go on to-night. I must go on to-night, or I shall never, never be happy again. Oh! I *must* go on;" and she wrung her hands as if her heart would break.

"Well, then," said Mrs. Vanderlin, "if you expect to return this way, and can trust me with her, you may leave your babe with me until you get back. I am a mother, myself, and I promise you, I will watch over her with all a mother's tenderness, as long as she remains in my care."

At this the strange lady fell upon her knees and clasping Mrs. Vanderlin's hand in both of hers, kissed it again and again, repeating with a sort of hysteric laugh, "Oh! thank you, thank you! You are so kind, so kind"—until the good woman, half suspecting her sanity, raised her to her feet and begged her to compose herself, and bathe her face in the basin of clear cold water which Maria had been holding in her hands, as she stood in dumb amazement through the whole of the scene which had just transpired.

The stranger in a few moments became more tranquil, laid aside her bonnet, and proceeded to bathe her face as her kind hostess had suggested, and

to re-arrange her hair, which had come loose and hung in masses of jet black ringlets down her back; and, while thus engaged, Mrs. Vanderlin had an opportunity to observe that her guest was apparently about twenty years of age, and exquisitely beautiful, both in form and feature, while her air and dress indicated that she had enjoyed the advantages of far more than ordinary culture and refinement. By the time she had completed her toilet and put on her bonnet again, supper was announced; but although "Aunt Tilda" had excelled herself in the preparation of the tempting meal, which is the highest encomium I could possibly bestow upon it, the strange lady only supped a cup of coffee and then arose from the table and went softly to the bed where Mrs. Vanderlin had laid her sleeping babe. She stood for some minutes as still as a statue and silently gazed upon the little form which lay before her, so calm and still that but for the glow of health that tinged its beautifully chiselled features it might have been mistaken for a corpse. At length she clasped her hands and knelt down by its side, and what fervent prayers for the weal of her innocent child were wafted on the wings of attendant angels from her burdened spirit to the loving Father of All, only God and a mother's heart can ever know;

for no sound except a low stifling sob escaped her lips during the long hour she was kneeling there.

When she arose, her servant was standing at the door with her portmanteau in his hand. She needed no other admonition that the time had come when she must go. She stooped and imprinted one kiss on the placid brow of her angelic babe, and turned away in a paroxysm of anguish too deep for tears. Mrs. Vanderlin supported her to the stile, where they stood for some moments locked in each other's arms, both too full of sad emotion to speak a word, and then with a fervid kiss twice repeated, they parted in silence never to meet again.

Mrs. Vanderlin stood looking after her departed guest until she faded from view in the dim starlight, and the sound of the horses' feet died away in the distance, and then returned to the house to see to the comfort of her little charge. Maria had already put Johnny to bed, and after giving Aunt Tilda directions to prepare some nourishment for the baby in case it should wake, the good lady took the little thing tenderly in her arms and proceeded to undress it herself, which she accomplished without arousing it to consciousness, as it was still sunk in the deep strong sleep which kind nature always brings to the

relief of a healthy system from the effects of a long-sustained fatigue. Upon thus viewing it more attentively than she had before had a chance to do, she found the child to be one of almost supernatural beauty, apparently some ten or eleven months of age; and suspended by a ribbon around its neck was a silver medal, bearing on one side the inscription, "Sept. 3, 1810," and on the other the single word, "Celeste." She sat for hours looking dreamily down upon the calm sweet features of the innocent sleeper as it lay upon her lap, and then committing her soul to the Great Preserver of all things, with a fervent and trustful petition for the safety of her husband and her boy, she sought her couch, and with the little waif nestling in her bosom, sunk sweetly into that delicious repose which the innocent and virtuous alone can know, to dream perhaps of the angelic spirit of her own beautiful child beckoning her to the sunlit shores of its heavenly home.

But whatever may have been her dreams, the birds had long been caroling their morning hymns when the quiet slumbers of Mrs. Vanderlin were broken by Johnny, who was tugging at her sleeve and calling to her in a perfect ecstasy of joy: "Oh! Mamma, mamma, wake up! wake up! God has sent us another

little sister;" while Celeste—for so she was ever afterwards called—refreshed by her long sleep, was sitting up in the bed by her side, clapping her dimpled little hands in great glee, and stretching them out to him saying in her broken accents. "Take, take," and then cuddling her face down in his mamma's bosom with a merry chuckle when he would reach out to take hold of them. What thoughts were passing through the mind of the pure-hearted, amiable woman as she lay for some minutes and watched with an affectionate smile the gleeful play of those two guileless beings across her bosom? I will not assume to say, but when Celeste put her plump little arms about her neck and said, "Tiss, mamma, tiss," she clasped her to her heart and kissed her again and again, as if she had been indeed her own lost darling.

Mrs. Vanderlin was far too well bred to seek to probe the secret source of sorrow in her beautiful guest of the previous night, and far too kind and pure in spirit even to suspect her harshly; but when Uncle Harry came in that morning, while she was seated at breakfast, as his custom was, to get his tin cup filled with coffee at the "white folks' table," and have it sweetned by the hand of his beloved mistress, he shook his head as he looked at the little stranger in

her lap, and said: "Mistress, 'tain't none o' my *bizness*, but I'm feared twarnt right fur you to keep dat chile fur dat 'oman. Sump'ns wrong about her, sho; kase I axe dat nigger, dat was with her, who dey wus, and whar dey gwine, and what dey bizness wus, an heap o' dem kind o' questions, an ebery word I got out'n him, 'I dunno,' 'I dunno.' He *do* know? He know he do! Sump'ns wrong, somewhar, sho." Just then the babe looked up in his face with the sweet smile of trusting innocence and held out to him her tiny hand. The heart of the good old darky was melted in an instant. He reverently kissed the tips of the little velvety fingers, as they lay upon his bony palm, and added in a subdued and feeling tone: "Poor little creetur! I reckin *somebody* got to take keer uv it, dough."

CHAPTER II.

It was near the close of one of those mild balmy days, in that peculiar season about the first of November, known throughout the West as Indian summer, when Major Vanderlin reached home on his return from Virginia. I need not attempt to describe the rapturous meeting between him and his loving

wife, the wild delight of his little boy, who ran ahead of his mother as she flew with open arms to meet her husband at the gate, or the rude demonstrations of joy exhibited by the the crowd of negroes, old and young, who came thronging from every direction to welcome their beloved master back to the bosom of his family. After shaking hands with them all round, and kindly inquiring after the health of each, with his wife upon his arm and holding his boy by the hand, he turned with emotions of unspeakable happiness to enter once more his own delightful dwelling.

When they reached the family room, the bright-faced joyous child, still clinging to one of his father's fingers and pulling him towards the crib, which stood near one of the windows, repeated several times before he succeeded in fully arresting his attention: "Oh pa! oh pa! come and see our little sister. Come and see our little sister." At length noticing the little fellow's persistent earnestness, the Major looked at his wife with a strange puzzled sort of expression, when the good woman, without saying a word, led him to the crib where the little Celeste, tired with play, was reposing in the blissful unconsciousness of infant slumber. The mellow rose-tinged rays of the setting sun, falling softly upon

the placid face of the innocent sleeper, imparted to its exquisite lineaments the radiance of an almost celestial beauty; and for several moments the three stood silently gazing upon the lovely vision, as if afraid it would fade from the view like the unsubstantial tints of an evening rainbow.

Presently little Johnny, attracted by Maria, who had entered the hall with the master's saddlebags, bounded away to rummage their capacious pockets for long-expected presents, and Mrs. Vanderlin proceeded to explain to her husband the strange manner in which the lovely little offcast had been thrown upon her care. He heard her through, and after standing silent for several moments with a troubled thoughtful look he asked:

"Well, supposing her mother shall never come for her again—as it is more than likely she never will—what do you propose to do with the child?"

Mrs. Vanderlin placed her arms around her husband's neck, and looking up lovingly into his face replied:

"She shall be our own. We will love her as if she were indeed bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. We will raise her up in the fear and to the honor of the Good Father who has sent her to us for some wise

purpose; may be to nestle in our hearts like our own darling little Nettie. I promised her poor mother that I would treat her with all a mother's tenderness as long as she should remain in my care; and if it should please God that it shall be till I die, the little thing shall never know, if I can help it, but what she is my own child."

"That is spoken like my own noble wife!" said the Major as he clasped her to his bosom and kissed her again and again; "she shall indeed be our own." And from that moment Celeste took the place of a child in the family as well as in the hearts of that most excellent pair.

CHAPTER III.

Ten years had passed away when I went into the neighborhood to attend the school of a most admirable teacher, but somewhat eccentric gentleman, named Benson. Celeste—lovely and precocious as she was even as a baby—had grown in beauty and intelligence as she had grown in years. Mrs. Vanderlin, who, as I have said, was a cultivated christian lady, had taken great pains not only in training her intellect, but in instilling into her heart

principles of the purest piety; and under such teaching she became the jewel of the Major's household, while the unvarying sweetness of her temper and the quietness of her manners won for her the affection of nearly all who knew her, both white and black, as the few who still live to remember her will bear me witness.

Johnny, who was now some sixteen years of age, had been sent off to some college in old Virginia, the name of which I now disremember, if I ever knew it; but Celeste became a pupil of Mr. Benson. From the extraordinary pains which her foster-mother had taken in teaching her, as well as her own superior sprightliness of intellect, she was a long way the best scholar in the school, and I think the very finest reader of her age I ever listened to in my life. Owing to the scarcity of school books at that day, and partly perhaps owing to the anxiety of Mrs. Vanderlin that she should be thoroughly instructed in the word of God, her reading book was the New Testament; and to this day I recall the impression produced upon my mind—rude and ignorant as I was—by certain passages of that inspired volume as they fell like thrilling music from her lips.

Possessing such advantage over her associates both

in personal beauty and intellectual culture, it might be reasonably supposed that she was the object of their envy and ill-will, as I am sorry to say is too often the case. But with her, strange as it may seem, it was not so. On the contrary, she was the pride—and I might almost say the *idol*—of the whole school, with the single exception of a girl by the name of Mahala Grainger.

Mahala was a tall, slim, flaxen-haired, sharp-featured girl, some fourteen or fifteen years old, and I think about as disagreeable, ill-contrived a creature as I ever saw in all my life. Celeste had never given her any cause of offense in her life, I suppose; yet Mahala could never hear a word spoken in her praise, or even her name mentioned, without making some sneering remark about her; still I never knew of her saying any unkind word *to* Celeste except on one occasion; and that I am sure I shall never forget to my dying day. It was near about the middle of the session, school had let out for dinner, Mr. Benson was out taking his usual stroll through the woods, and most of the children were at play; but Mahala and a few others of the larger girls were in the house, where I was trying to work a sum in the Double Rule of Three. Mahala pulled out the teacher's table drawer,

and picked up a large apple, which some of the children had given him, and was about to eat it, when Celeste took hold of her arm and said in the softest, sweetest voice you ever heard: "Please, Mahala, don't do that; it would be so wrong."

"Who made *you* so wise, little smarty? I'd like to know what great harm there is in taking an apple, that you make such a fuss about it." said Mahala, taking a pretty liberal bite out of the apple as she closed her remark. I'm sure it ain't stealing when you all were looking at me and saw me do it."

"Oh no," said Celeste, "I didn't say it *was* stealing; but my ma has always taught me that it would be wrong for me to take even a *pin* that didn't belong to me, without asking the owner's consent, no difference whether any one saw me or not."

"*Your* ma!" said Mahala with a little sneer—"Your ma! you've got no ma, or if you have she's nothing but a nasty, trifling, good-for-nothing trollop, that decent people wouldn't speak to."

"Why Mahala!" exclaimed Celeste, "How can you talk so? Ain't you ashamed of yourself?"

"No, I ain't," replied Mahala with a malicious sneering sort of a laugh; "*You're* nobody; you've got no mammy or daddy either that anybody would

speak to. Mrs. Vanderlin is no more your mother than I am; and if you don't believe me go and ask Melissa Turner there; she knows as well as I do that Mrs. Vanderlin ain't your mother."

Celeste ran to Melissa Turner, who was a good kind-hearted truthful girl, and buried her face in her lap; but before she could choke down her emotion to speak the teacher came in and called us all to books. As soon as he took his seat, I went up to ask him about the sum I had been trying to work and while he was showing me how to do it he called Celeste to read. She stood up by him, with her book up to her face, utterly unable to speak a word. Mr. Benson was a very petulant, fractious sort of man, although one of the most high-toned, sensitive gentlemen at heart in the world; and having twice told Celeste to read, he got out of patience, and struck her a sharp lick across the shoulders with his switch. I can see *now* the imploring expression upon that angelic face, and I can hear that sad, wailing, piteous voice as she looked at him through the tears that were swimming in her mild beautiful eyes and said: "Please, sir, don't whip me." The teacher turned as pale as a sheet in an instant and in a few moments Celeste began to read.

Her lesson was that most wondrous of all the

utterances that were ever framed in human language—the Sermon on the Mount—and I do not exaggerate when I say that since the moment they fell from the lips of our Blessed Saviour, the divine precepts it contains were never pronounced with a sublimer pathos than filled the soft, musical, trembling voice of that little girl. For years and years afterwards, I could hear those low, sweet, plaintive, sob-broken tones ringing in my ears. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." By the time she read those two verses there was not a dry eye in the house; but as she proceeded, her voice became less and less broken, and when she finished the one which of all others carries upon its face the sublime impress of Divinity: "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you," she paused, and clasped her hands and looking up towards heaven with an expression of more than earthly beauty irradiating every feature, and with an intensity of feeling trembling upon each separate syllable such as no orator nor actor ever equaled said: "Oh Father in heaven, help me to do this for my dear Saviour's

sake."

As she stood for a moment in the very attitude of earnest expectation, with her hands still clasped, her lips half open, with the sweet smile of simple trusting faith, and looking up as if her eyes were fixed upon the face of a loving parent, the effect was such as I cannot attempt to describe. My own heart actually stood still, as for an instant I really expected to hear an audible reply to her simple earnest prayer, so fervently had it gushed up from the very depth of her soul. The teacher was perfectly overwhelmed. He seized his hat and rushed from the house, and although he did not return for more than an hour I do not think there was a single word spoken in the house during his absence.

This was Celeste's last day at school. That evening when she put her arms around the neck of Mrs. Vanderlin and kissed her, as had always been her custom on meeting her after being separated but for a few hours, she clung to her foster-mother with even more than her usual tenderness and with a passionate fervor which startled the good lady asked: "Ain't you my own ma?"

"Yes, my darling," replied Mrs. Vanderlin, pressing her to her bosom and kissing her fondly

again—"haven't I always loved you like a mother?"

"Yes, but ain't you my own, *own* ma?" added Celeste with increased earnestness, her whole soul seeming to hang upon the reply she expected.

There was a momentary struggle in the breast of the noble-hearted woman between her christian fealty to *truth* in its minute requirements, and her affection for the tender trusting child whom she knew the truth would wound. The former at length prevailed, and folding the trembling little creature again to her heart she said softly:

"No, my child, I am not your *own* ma, but—" Celeste heard no more. The blood quick as a flash of lightning, fell from her cheek, her pulse ceased to beat and she lay limp and lifeless to all appearance in her benefactress' arms.

Had the death angel then stopped forever the quiet current of her innocent and joyous life, would the pang have been more bitter than that which strained every fibre of her warm; loving heart when its sweetest, holiest thought was thus driven out never to return? Perhaps some who have stood in the mute agony of unutterable anguish and gazed for the last time upon the still, cold features of a mother's face beneath the glass of a coffin lid can tell.

I will not attempt to describe the poor smitten child in the wild ravings and pitiful wailings of the long and terrible delirium that ensured, nor portray the intense anxiety of the Major and Mrs. Vanderlin as they sat by her bedside and watched her pallid face through the weary weeks her gentle spirit hovered tremblingly over the dividing line between this and the unseen world beyond. But one evening just as the sun was sinking down she raised her wasted little arms towards Mrs. Vanderlin, who was watching by her bedside, and with a faint sweet smile flitting over her pale, melancholy features sobbed in a low, feeble, entreating voice, "Mayn't I *call* you mother any how?"

"Yes, my darling," said Mrs. Vanderlin, tenderly kissing the parched lips of the little sufferer, "you shall always be my own sweet child, and I will be your own, *own* ma!"

The fitful smile that for a moment played across the wan and weary face of the gentle being faded away as she sank into a deep and quiet slumber, for the first time since that terrible afternoon.

The next morning found her rational and composed, but it was long before Time—the kind soother of earthly sorrow—again brought the roses to

her cheeks and the light of joy to her mild beautiful eyes. In the mean time the school dragged wearily to its close, but its light had gone out, and none regretted the dawn of the last day of the session. Poor Benson, who had never been seen to smile since the last evening of Celeste's attendance, made us a sad, mournful farewell speech, and teacher and scholars parted silently and in tears. In a few days, without asking pay from any of his patrons for his services, he wandered off and was never heard of by any one in that neighborhood again.

CHAPTER IV.

A little over five years had elapsed when I again had occasion to visit the neighborhood, where my business detained me for several weeks. Whether anything besides the confidence I felt of receiving a hospitable welcome and comfortable entertainment under the roof of Major Vanderlin had any influence in causing me to make his residence my first point of destination, it is perhaps unnecessary for me to say; but so it was, about nightfall on the second day after leaving home, I reached his house, where, as I had anticipated, I was received with the utmost cordiality

by both himself and his excellent lady. Time had dealt so kindly with them that I could perceive but little change in either; but the transformation which had taken place in the appearance of Celeste was far beyond anything my imagination had been able to conceive, although I must confess that it had been busily engaged upon that very subject during the greater part of my long and tiresome ride.

She was in her seventeenth year, precisely at the age—especially in the estimation of young men of an ardent temperament—at which female loveliness is seen in its very highest perfection, and certainly a more faultlessly beautiful being either in form or feature my eyes never beheld. I will not hazard a description of her personal charms, for I know I should fail in the attempt; or if I should succeed even passably well, my most indulgent reader might be tempted to suspect me of hyperbole. Extraordinary as they were, however, they were in nowise superior to those of her intellect; for although she had not attended school a single day since I had last seen her at poor Benson's, she had been under the constant tuition of her foster-mother, who had not only instructed her thoroughly in all the branches of female education usually taught at that day, but by

both precept and example had cultivated in her character those refining graces of true christianity without which it is impossible for womanhood to attain its ultimate sublimity. I will only add that while the surroundings of wealth and comfort, enhanced as they were by the open-hearted hospitality of Major Vanderlin and his wife, were certainly sufficient to make their home one of most agreeable abodes on earth, it seemed to me that the mere presence of Celeste rendered it a perfect paradise.

We had been sitting for some time around the fireside talking of persons and incidents associated with my former residence in the neighborhood, and had just risen from our seats to walk out to supper, when we were all somewhat surprised by the appearance of a man standing looking in on us through the door which led into the hall. I have never been so impressed on the first sight of any other stranger, either before or since; for he was by all odds the handsomest man I ever saw in my life—full six feet high, straight as an Indian, with a broad, full chest, and coal-black hair which clustered in short, thick curls above a set of finely chiseled, manly features, heightened in effect by a pair of the most

brilliant and beautiful brown eyes that every lit up a human face. He stood a moment with his traveling cap in his hand, looking at us with a smile as if he would solicit the hospitalities of the house, but without saying a word, when Celeste screamed "My brother!" and rushed in to his arms. The Major and Mrs. Vanderlin, who had no doubt been slightly confused by the unexpected intrusion, followed her in an instant, and the remainder of the scene I will leave the reader to imagine; for it was one of those which lie beyond the reach of any mere verbal description, and it would be folly in me to attempt it.

When the sudden gush of joy in all the parties to the touching tableau had partially exhausted itself in repeated and rapturous embraces, with mingled laughter and tears, I was introduced to Mr. John Vanderlin just home again from his long absence at college; for it must be remembered that the facilities for traveling in those days were nothing like they are at present, and that a journey to the eastern portion of Virginia was then a more serious undertaking than a trip to California or a voyage to Europe would be now; in consequence of which it was considered impracticable for John to return to Kentucky until he had completed his course at school. It had been more

than five years since he had left the paternal mansion, a mere stripling, scarcely sixteen years of age, to return that night for the first time, the stalwart, finely-developed, handsome man who stood before us; and it may not be very remarkable that the striking changes which these years had wrought in his personal appearance should have been sufficient to deceive even the subtle instincts of a mother's love; but why they should not as readily foil the penetrating glance of Celeste is something I have never been able to fully understand. It is true that I even then had a vague sort of impression as to the reason, for when I noticed how fondly she clung to his arm, and how lovingly she looked up into his fine, manly face, as we all walked out to supper, it was perfectly plain to me that a remarkably fine cake I had been very busily baking had been suddenly turned into a most miserable batch of dough.

When supper was over and we were again seated around the fire in the family room, John took from around his neck a heavy gold chain, to which was attached what seemed to be a massive medal of the same precious material, and tossing it into the lap of Celeste, said: "There, sister, is a little present sent to you by a lady whom I met last summer. How she

came to do so, I will tell you some time or other. when we have nothing else to talk about." The costly trinket was about two inches in diameter, elaborately carved and richly studded with jewels, which upon one of the sides had been ingeniously wrought into a wreath surrounding the word "CELESTE," which was composed of a curiously inlaid frost-work of minute diamonds. As none of us had ever seen anything of the kind before, we gathered around and gazed in mute amazement upon the splendid gift, until our attention was called away from it by his taking from his breast-pocket a small morocco-bound volume saying as he handed it to Celeste, "And here is another from the same kind hand; but ma,"—turning to Mrs. Vanderlin—"I'm afraid *you* will not like this one so well, for it is a Roman Catholic prayer-book—however, it can't hurt her much, I suppose, as it is in French, and she can't read a word in it."

"I am sorry you judge me so uncharitably, my son"—said Mrs. Vanderlin—"as to think I am bigot enough to harbor a prejudice against any one, and especially an humble christian, for not thinking exactly as I do myself. All true followers of our blessed Saviour are children of the same great family,

and joint heirs with the Elder Brother; no matter in what form of words they may show their love for him; and if the book contains only prayers to our Heavenly Father, I am sorry it is not in a language Celeste can understand, for I am sure she would find nothing in it to hurt her."

At this point in the conversation between his wife and son, Major Vanderlin who had been holding the curious and costly medal close to the candle, turning it over and over and examining every part of it with the minutest scrutiny, exclaimed with a sudden start, "Great God! it is Celeste," and sat staring at it with the fixed rigid look of one under the spell of some terrible fascination he was unable to dispel. We instantly gathered around him, all of us more or less alarmed by his sudden and extreme emotion. But the moment we discovered the cause of his amazement there was not a one of us who was not as completely lost in wonder as he was himself. In his minute examination of the trinket he had pressed upon one of the largest jewels, which loosed a secret clasp, and one half of the medal, moved by a spring, swung around on a pivot, disclosing a miniature painting on ivory, executed in the most exquisite style of art, and presenting a portrait of Celeste, as perfect as the

highest human skill could possibly have made it. How long we stood around the Major, looking in speechless astonishment at the marvelous picture, I do not know; but, at length, as if suddenly waking out of a dream, he asked excitedly, "Did you ever *see* anything so wonderful? John, where did you get this? Who made it? How did you come by it?"

John took the picture from his father's hand and sat down, and, after looking at it thoughtfully for some time, said in a sort of musing soliloquy: "Well, this is certainly the most wonderful coincidence I ever heard of in my life. It is strange I never discovered this before," and then relapsed into silence.

"Come, brother," said Celeste, after he had sat thus for some moments, "since our curiosity has been so much excited you will just have to go right on *now* and tell us all about this wonder, and the fairy who sent it to me."

"There is nothing remarkable in anything I know about it," said John; "and what I do know can be soon told. After I graduated, last summer, although I was exceedingly anxious to get home, I thought it best to follow a suggestion in one of pa's letters and visit the great cities in the East before my return to

Kentucky, as I didn't know when I would have another opportunity, if ever. I accordingly went over to Washington, and after remaining there a few days visited Baltimore; and having satisfied what curiosity I had to see that place, I took passage with a number of others on a vessel leaving that port for New York. Shortly after going aboard, I noticed among the passengers a lady apparently about thirty-seven or eight years of age, who impressed me more than any stranger I ever met in my life. It was not the style she maintained, nor the unusual deference shown her by the Captain and other officers of the vessel, which interested me so strangely, but something remarkable about her face—something which seemed to call up the shadow of some vague, long-forgotten dream, something I could not account for to save my life. I was perfectly satisfied that I had never met her before, for besides her foreign air, and the fact that she and her attendants invariably addressed each other in the Spanish language, when I would analyze her features one by one I was more and more convinced that until then I had never seen her in my life. Still there was a peculiar expression about her countenance that haunted me with the idea that I had known her years and years ago—or rather with the

dreamy sort of impression that away back in the indefinite past we had been playmates together, when we were both little children and she younger than myself. And then as I would realize the fact that she was old enough to be my mother I would almost shudder at the suspicion of my own sanity suggested by such absurd conceits. Whether it was because she was conscious of the singular impression she had made upon me, or from some other cause, I do not know, but I observed her frequently eying me attentively; and on our second day out I was surprised to hear her acknowledge some trifling courtesy I had involuntarily shown her, in the purest and most elegant English. This led to an acquaintance, which resulted in repeated and long-continued conversations between us during the remainder of our voyage. In one of these, after I had given her an artless history of my childhood and college life, I ventured to remark upon the strange interest with which she had inspired me from the first, and told her that I could not rid myself of the impression that I had met her before, to which she replied: "That is impossible, as you have never before been out of Kentucky or Virginia." She then informed me that she was a native of the province of

Texas, in the Republic of Mexico, where her family ranked among the most wealthy and influential of the old Castilian settlers; that she had accompanied her husband to Washington where he had been sent on some secret but important mission, and that she was then on her way to join him in New York, whither he had some days preceded her. She went on to speak in ardent and enthusiastic terms of Texas as a field for talented and ambitious young men, and alluded to the numerous paths to glory and distinction which would soon be opened up within its borders, in such a way as to lead me to suspect that she anticipated a revolt in that province before many years, and that she would persuade me to embark my own fortunes in the coming revolution. But this was only a suspicion on my part, for she spoke only in vague and general terms, without committing herself by any positive expression.

One day near the close of our voyage, as I was standing leaning on the taffrail looking back upon the long waste of water we had traversed, the lady approached me and asked: "Why are you so pensive, my young friend? What mournful but pleasant subject has engrossed your thoughts for this half hour you have been standing here?"

"My soul, madam" said I "has been far away in the green groves of my boyhood's home, with two of the purest, most perfect beings that ever adorned this earth—my mother and my sister Celeste." "Celeste!" she exclaimed, "my own and my sainted mother's name!" She then made me sit down and asked me a hundred questions about my sister, how old she was, and how she looked and all about her. Ha! ha! how funny it was that I sat there and described in the affectionate ardor of a brother's heart the little sprite of a thing I had left years before without ever dreaming that she had grown to be this great fine-looking girl here"—taking Celeste by the hand. "We sat there a long time, I pouring out my whole soul upon topics dearer to me than all others—father, mother, sister, home—and she listening with the most intense and curious interest to every word that fell from my lips.

At length she arose, and taking from her neck the chain and locket, placed them in my hand and said:

"I thank you for the delightful history you have given me of your home-circle and especially for your graphic picture of your little sister. Give her this as a present from me for her name. "I beg your pardon, madam," said I, "the gift is entirely too costly. I

cannot think of taking it." "Oh take it, take it," said she; "it's a mere bauble, sir. I assure you that I do not value it a farthing; but you see it has her name upon it, and she will perhaps prize it on that account, if not as a token of the kind wishes of a mere stranger. And here," she continued, taking this little volume from her bosom, "give her that also. It is something I value a thousand times more than the glittering toy you hold in your hand. It is my mother's prayer-book, with her maiden name written in her own dear hand upon the title page. See here it is: 'Celeste Benoist, 1777.' Give her this. It has never been blessed by our Holy Father that I know of, but its hallowed pages have been consecrated by the tears of one of the purest saints in heaven. Give it to her, and may that gentle spirit hover about her and sustain her in whatever hour of sorrow and sadness may betide her in life. But stop, let me write my name under my mother's for her." She kissed the page reverently, and with the tears trickling down her face, wrote with her pencil as you see here: "Celeste Zavala, 1826," and then hurried away. This was our last interview. We anchored early the next morning in New York harbor, her husband came out to meet her in a boat, which had left the side of the ship before I knew of

her departure, and I only had an opportunity to wave her adieu as they rowed rapidly towards the wharf. When she reached the shore she turned and answered my farewell signal with a single wave of her handkerchief, and I saw her no more.

CHAPTER V.

A full minute or more had elapsed after John had finished his story before another word was spoken by any one. Raised as I had been in the backwoods, and entirely unused to anything bordering so nearly on the realm of the romantic, its effect upon myself was such as I could scarcely describe if I should attempt it. It fascinated my imagination like some strange tale of enchantment, while the mind of each of the others seemed completely absorbed by its own thronging fancies. At length, however, the silence was broken by some inquiry which led into conversation upon domestic and neighborhood topics, that continued far into the night, and in which the prayer-book and locket, as well as the singular incident connected with them, seemed to be speedily forgotten by every one except myself.

I left the next morning: but during my stay in the neighborhood I had frequent opportunities of meeting with John Vanderlin, between whom and myself there had sprung up a mutual attachment which soon ripened into the most intimate friendship; and I must say that a nobler-hearted fellow than I found him to be I don't think ever trod the earth—an opinion, by the way, in which it occurred to me every time I saw them together that Celeste herself was becoming more and more confirmed every day of her life; though the indications which gave rise to this surmise on my part were of such a character that I doubt whether anybody else would have noticed them at all. John, at least, never appeared to consider what appeared to me to be the evidences of a somewhat tenderer sentiment as anything more than the ordinary manifestations of a sisterly affection, if indeed they did not escape his observation entirely.

One evening, however, about a month or such a matter after he got home, he was sitting in the dining-room where Celeste was engaged cutting out a large lot of clothing for the negroes, apparently absorbed in the perusal of some book he had brought with him on his return from college. It was one of those peculiarly quiet afternoons near the beginning

of winter, such as every one who has lived in the country can readily recall. The snow was falling in large soft flakes; man and beast alike had sought some friendly shelter, and not a living thing could be seen in the silent landscape except a couple of little birds cuddling beneath the protecting boughs of a cedar which grew near the window. The dreary, drowsy prospect without added a more genial glow to the warm, bright fire that burnt in the wide, old-fashioned fire-place, and everything around, even to the old cat which sat dozing on the corner of the hearth, seemed to contribute to the delicious feeling of security and comfort which stole softly over the senses and suffused the souls of John Vanderlin and his lovely foster-sister, who were no doubt both reveling in the same sweet dream of future happiness, albeit one seemed engrossed in the page before him, and the other intent alone upon the work in hand. The Major was from home, Mrs. Vanderlin was busy sewing in her own room, the house servants had seized the occasion to gather round the kitchen fire, and the young couple were alone as they had been for several hours, when John laid his book upon the large dining-table at which Celeste was still employed, and taking her by the hand said:

"Come, sister, you have worked enough for today; sit down here, I have something I want to tell you."

Some of my lovely young readers can tell, perhaps, whether her heart beat any faster or not, as he pulled her gently down upon his knee and placed his arm around her waist. I only know that she looked down at the broad manly hand that held her own and trembled a little as he continued:

"I want to make a confidant of you. I want to tell you about my little sweetheart, the bright beautiful angel whose image hovered about me all through my college life, and who stole, I have no doubt, many an hour that ought to have been devoted to my books. Oh! Celeste, she is *so* lovely, so kind, so gentle! I love her better than anything on earth, better even than life, and I am going to ask her to marry me. Tell me what you think of it. Do you think I ought to?"

The blush that had mantled the cheek of the beautiful girl as she half reluctantly took her seat had faded out, and she was rather pale as she sat silent for a moment or two tremulously patting the floor with the little foot that just peeped out from beneath her dress; but at length she replied without looking up:

"She must be very lovely, brother, or you could not love her so, and I'm sure I see no reason why you

should not ask her to marry you if you think she will make you a good wife, and if she loves you in return."

"That is precisely what I want to know," said John with an eager look at the downcast features of the lovely face before him; "that is just what I want you to tell me—whether she *does* love me or not."

"Why, brother, how should I know?" asked Celeste raising her large lustrous eyes until they met his with an expression that made every fibre in his body tingle, and then casting them suddenly down again.

"Because," said John gently tightening the pressure upon the little hand he held in his, "because you are just that very same little angel yourself, Celeste, and I want you to tell me if you love me—if you will marry me."

There was a silence of several seconds, during which a shade of sadness stole over the exquisite features of Celeste, while John felt his heart beat hurriedly and every nerve quivering with a rapturous excitement such as he had never felt before. At length she looked up into his face with a steadiness which perhaps would have been surprising to some of my fair readers, but still with a slight tremor in her voice,

and replied:

"That I *do* love you it would be foolish as well as wicked in me to deny, for the instincts of my own heart have long since taught me that you know it, and the blissful thought that I am beloved by you is more of happiness than I have ever suffered myself to hope, though it has been the one yearning desire of my soul for years; but have you *thought* of this—of what you have just been saying? Have you reflected that you are rich, and talented, and accomplished, and of a family which entitles you to mate with the proudest in the land, while I am but a pensioner upon the charity of your generous parents, a poor nameless child of shame and sorrow? Have you never considered the injustice you might do yourself by marrying an unknown offcast? Have you never feared that after the flush of passion has passed away and you are among your peers in birth and fortune you may be ashamed of the obscure and disgraced lineage of your wife?"

"Celeste!" he replied in a tone of sorrowful reproach, "I did not think you *could* be so unjust to me"

"I am not unjust to you, brother," said she; "I only wish you to know whether you fully understand

your own heart in this matter."

"Understand my own heart!" he echoed—"Listen to me. I swear to you by all that is holy, that there has not been an hour since I first beheld you when you have not been dearer to me than all else on earth. At first you were to me something more than mortal, a precious gift sent to us on celestial wings direct from Heaven. Through all the after years of our innocent childhood you were ever the pure, beautiful, spotless angel about my path. With maturer years came the blissful dream of the sweet mysterious tie that would make us one—one in hope, in joy, in sorrow, in heart and in soul, through all our lives, and still on through all eternity. That delicious thought sustained me through years of absence from home and from friends, when my heart yearned most for their joys. It inspired me with the determination to make myself worthy of your love, and to achieve a distinction which you could share with me in pride. Hour by hour, and day by day, and year after year, have I cherished it, until it has become essential to my own existence, part and parcel of my very being. Tear it from my soul, and there can be neither hope nor happiness for me in my life. Tell me if I do not understand my own heart. What do I care for birth or

family? Do I not know that you are as pure and good as you are beautiful?"

The lovely girl hid her face in his bosom, and he whispered as his hand softly smoothed her jet black tresses: "Tell me, Celeste, that you will be mine?"

When she looked up again her eyes were wet with tears, and when John had wiped them tenderly away she said:

"How deeply I love you, how absolutely I worship you, I have no language to tell; but as the only token I have to give you of an affection which none but a woman's heart can feel, take this; it is the only relic I have of my poor erring mother"—and she hung around his neck the silver medal she wore when she was left an infant in the care of Mrs. Vanderlin, and as she did so she bowed her head on his shoulder and wept most piteously. She composed herself, however, in a few minutes, and continued: "Now, brother, I have given you the most sacred pledge in my power of the affection I bear you—a token which shows that I love you even more than the mother that bore me; but I can marry you only on one condition, and that is that our marriage shall meet the full approbation of your ma. She took me to her bosom when I was a poor, feeble, helpless babe; and houseless, penniless,

nameless offcast as I was, she nurtured me, if possible, with more than a mother's tenderness; she has led me along the paths of innocence and virtue; she has pointed me the way to the blessed abode of purity and holiness and peace, compared with which all the joys and pleasures of this fleeting life are worse than vanity. From my earliest infancy, as you know, I have clung to her with a love almost amounting to idolatry, and I had rather lay down the life she saved, I had rather forego the bliss of hearing you call me wife, which I should value a thousand times more than life, than to give her a single pang of sorrow. If she consents, I will gladly, joyously give you my hand as you now have my heart, but otherwise I cannot while she lives."

Just at the moment Mrs. Vanderlin entered the room, and John called out to her: "Come here, ma! I have just been begging Celeste to marry me, but she says she won't do it without you consent. Please, ma, make her, won't you?" and with that he took the blushing face of the beautiful girl between his hands, and imprinted a long rapturous kiss right upon her pretty, pouting little mouth.

"Brother, you are so ridiculous!" said Celeste.

"Why, what are you children doing there?" asked

good Mrs. Vanderlin with a very ill-concealed expression of joy beaming upon her motherly face.

"Doing!" said John, "nothing at all. I've just been courting Celeste and she says she will marry me if you are willing; and now, seriously and earnestly, ma, we love each other devotedly, and I ask you if you are willing for us to marry?"

"My dear children," said Mrs. Vanderlin approaching and putting her arms around the necks of the young couple, "I am almost too happy to speak. It has been my prayer for years that you my noble boy, and my darling girl, should become one in heart and soul, and that our happy household should be reunited and remain unbroken until the Good Master's summons calls me home; and now thank God it has been answered. I am happier still on your pa's account. He has been under the cloud of some great trouble for more than a year, and within the last month or two he has sometimes seemed so sad that I have often wept in secret for hidden sorrow; but now I know he will be happy again. I *know* this will bring the sunshine back to his heart once more. May God bless you!"—and she kissed each of them again and again.

I had made my arrangements to start home on the

next morning, and had promised John Vanderlin that I would come and stay all night with him. I got there just before night-fall, and a few minutes afterwards Major Vanderlin came in, and after brushing the snow off our big boots and shoes we all gathered around the fire in the family-room, and the evening wore away with the usual chat until supper time. When supper was over we resumed our places around the family fireside and talked until bed-time, when John and I retired; and after we had got in bed he kept me awake until late in the night telling about his courtship, and his plans and hopes of future happiness; and as he finally sunk to sleep I don't suppose a more joyous contented spirit than his ever glided into the shadowy realm of dreams.

As we left the room Major Vanderlin sat looking thoughtfully into the fire; and after we had all retired except him and his good wife, she sat down in his lap with her face radiant with mingled joy and hope, and putting her arms lovingly around his neck she kissed him and said:

"Oh, father, I am *so* happy to-night. I have something to tell you that I am sure will drive the dark shadows from your soul. John and Celeste are going to marry."

"My God," exclaimed the Major, with an expression of anguish as if a sudden pang had torn his very heart strings, "I have been expecting this! and so all my long-cherished plans are brought to nothing, my fondest hopes to black despair. Why did he not go to Europe as I advised and urged him? No, no, mother, it cannot, *shall* not be. I have other plans for John—for them both. I have had them for years, and they shall not be defeated. It was to prevent this very thing I kept him five years from home. I have another, quite another match for John."

"But father—" interrupted Mrs. Vanderlin.

"I'll hear no more about it,"—continued the Major, vehemently—"I tell you I have other plans for them, and they shall not be defeated. If they persist in the impious thought of thwarting my will, I'll drive them from my sight forever."

Mrs. Vanderlin, who had never before seen her husband under such excitement or heard a harsh word from his lips, retired weeping to her bed, and long after her stricken spirit had sunk into the troubled sleep which followed, he sat looking moodily into the fire, or walked the floor with every feature writhing under the intensity of his mental agony.

John and I were up the next morning bright and early; and, as it was to be our last day together for some time, he determined to ride with me as far as the forks of the road which was about six miles on my way. He accordingly ordered our horses to be saddled and ready, so that we could start immediately after breakfast; for I had a good ways to go, and wanted to make as long a ride that day as possible. When we went out to breakfast, I noticed a shade of sadness upon Mrs. Vanderlin's face which was quite unusual; and, as the Major did not make his appearance at all I learned upon inquiry of his good lady that he was complaining.

After breakfast I put on my overcoat and leggings, and with my saddle-bags on my arm, stepped into the family-room to bid them all good-bye. As I entered I was almost petrified with astonishment at the change which had taken place in Major Vanderlin's appearance. I never saw such a change in my life, either before or since. He looked at least ten years older than he did the evening before, and wore the most haggard care-worn expression I ever saw on a human face. I shook hands with him, and had just bidden farewell to Mrs. Vanderlin, who was still holding me by the hand giving me some good advice,

when John came in, all ready to ride, with Celeste just behind him. He noticed his father's altered appearance, and thinking no doubt to liven him up somewhat, spoke out in his usual frank, hearty manner:

"Come, pa, you mustn't go to getting sick now. Cheer up, cheer up. Hasn't ma told you the news yet? Hasn't she told you that I and Celeste have concluded to get married?"

The expression of horror that came over the face of Major Vanderlin almost froze my blood. He sprang to his feet in an instant and with lips as pale as death, and every feature distorted with the terrible emotion with which his whole soul seemed convulsed, he stretched out his hands toward them and exclaimed:

"Oh, my children, you know not what you would do. That must not, *can* not be. You are brother and sister. Celeste is my own daughter"—and then sank down in his chair with his face in his hands moaning bitterly, "Oh my God? my God! my punishment is more than I can bear."

Mrs. Vanderlin with a short, quick shriek sprang to her husband's side and threw her arms around his neck, and Celeste sank upon her knees at their feet wringing her hands in an agony of mingled grief and

terror. But I will not linger upon the heart-rending scene. John Vanderlin stood for a moment gazing upon it, with the fixed, unconscious, bewildered stare of one who has suddenly received a severe concussion of the brain; then turned and walked rapidly out of the room. Desiring myself to escape as quick as possible from a scene of distress which I was conscious my presence could only increase, I followed him immediately, and when I reached the portico he was already mounting his horse. I mounted mine also and rode on behind him, neither of us, speaking a word; he too full of his own thoughts, no doubt, to wish to talk, and I—as anybody can imagine—being at an utter loss for anything to say. When he reached the forks of the road he paused until I came up, when he silently extended his hand to me, and after grasping my own, instead of turning towards home as I supposed he would, he rode rapidly on in the direction he had been going.

CHAPTER VI.

It would be too much like sacrilege, even at this late day, to parade before the public the lingering sorrow which Major Vanderlin, and his wife and

daughter kept so sacredly enshrined in their own hearts, as day by day, and year after year, they silently waited their loved wanderer's return, until finally the mellowing touch of time had toned it down to something like that tender sadness we feel when we think of the loved ones long since dead. Nor will I abuse the forbearance of the generous reader, whose kind indulgence I trust I have had thus far, by dwelling upon the painful particulars of the long and fatal illness which terminated on the evening of the third of August, 1833, when the pure spirit of Mrs. Vanderlin floated quietly away on angel's wings to the blissful fruition of its life-long hopes; for although the beauty of her sublime Christian faith, exhibited in the serene resignation with which she awaited and welcomed the inevitable hour, might lend a pleasing light to the mournful picture, the unutterable anguish of her husband and Celeste, as they kissed for the last time her cold, pale lips, could but add a deeper gloom to its melancholy shadows.

Bitter as this fresh bereavement was, fate seemed yet unwilling to lift its relentless hand from the wretched man; or was it to teach him the priceless value of a daughter's love that, in a few months after the death of his estimable wife, Major Vanderlin was

himself stricken down with paralysis? From the earliest moment of this last terrible affliction he became, and continued through the few remaining years of his life, the sole object of that touching tenderness and more than filial devotion which Celeste from her earliest infancy had delighted to lavish upon her departed foster-mother. She became his constant companion, his patient nurse, his business manager, and the guardian and protectress of the numerous slaves whose pet and idol she had been since her first appearance in the family. Unable, however, even with her assistance, to attend properly to all the complicated affairs of his large and constantly increasing estate, which under the conviction that John would never return he had settled by will upon his daughter, he found it necessary to entrust the management of some of them to other hands; and the person selected for that purpose was a talented and accomplished young lawyer, whose superior attainments and excellent business habits were rapidly bringing him into notice, and whose prudence and fidelity in discharging the trust reposed in him soon vindicated the wisdom of the Major's choice in selecting him.

The transaction of the business entrusted to his

care brought him at once in contact with Celeste, who, as I have already said, had become the immediate agent and representative of her father in all of his affairs, and it was not long before the young man was as much struck by her remarkably fine sense as he had been from the first with the exquisite beauty of her person and her touching tenderness to her afflicted parent. It is not strange, therefore, that his visits to Major Vanderlin's soon became a great deal more frequent, or that his conversation on such occasions took a much wider range, than the mere exigencies of business required. Nor is it at all remarkable, on the other hand, that before a great while Celeste had begun to listen with a silent pleasure to the conversation of a handsome, intelligent young fellow, but a year or two older than herself, who when he was through with the dry details of notes and bonds and mortgages and leases, could talk as fluently of music and poetry and birds and flowers; or that she should feel her heart beat a little faster when she heard his footstep in the hall, or that she should even feel a shade more lonely when he was gone.

Such things, indeed, were but natural, and, as might have been expected under such circumstances,

a mutual attachment sprang up between the young couple, which continued to increase in each of them until one night after a long interview the young lawyer, as he stood looking down upon the wealth of raven tresses which half concealed the downcast face of the lovely woman, took her hand gently in his and whispered a short question, which was only answered by a slight though convulsive sort of pressure from the little hand he held, a long silence, and a quick upward glance of the large eloquent eyes, which were as quickly cast down again—a language which I have no doubt the most of my fair young readers will readily understand without an interpreter.

When in the morning the happy lovers presented themselves hand in hand before Major Vanderlin to ask his consent to their marriage he not only gave it with cheerfulness, but insisted that it should take place with the least possible delay, assigning as a reason that a recent unfavorable turn in his malady admonished him that his days were drawing nearly to a close, and that he wished to see them united before his death. They were accordingly married on the 6th of March, 1836, some weeks after their betrothal. The simple ceremony was solemnized at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, in the presence of a few select friends,

who were assembled in the Major's room, the bride and groom kneeling at the bedside of the dying man, whe laid his palsied hands upon their heads and invoked the blessing of Heaven upon their union, and then murmured as he closed his eyes as if sinking into a gentle slumber, "Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace."

CHAPTER VII.

But what a different scene in this curious drama was that Sunday evening transpiring in the far Southwest! The storm of revolution, whose low mutterings had so long been heard in the province of Texas, had reached its hight, and the "Lone Star" of the infant republic was gleaming fitfully through the clouds of battle. On the morning of the 23d of February, Santa Anna, assisted by General Almonte, Sesma, Cos and Castrillion, with an army of two thousand Mexicans, appeared before the little town of San Antonio de Bexar, garrisoned by only one hundred and forty rebel patriots, under the comnand of Col. Wm. B. Travis. Unable to cope with such formidable odds in the open field the small band of Texans, upon the first approach of the enemy, retired

into a fort near the northeastern part of the village, when they immediately ran up the flag of thirteen stripes of alternate red and white, with a single star emblazoned on a field of blue.

As they marched hurriedly and silently towards the fort, one of their number lagged leisurely some distance in the rear of his comrades. He was a strange sort of being, who had long been known among the Americans about San Antonio as "Crazy Jack"—not that he had ever exhibited any positive token of insanity, but solely from his singular appearance, his remarkable taciturnity and his otherwise eccentric habits, even when in the midst of the wild debauches in which he sometimes indulged. He invariably wore a full suit of buck-skin, embroidered in the most elaborate style of Indian art, and always went armed with a formidable bowie-knife and tomahawk, besides his heavy Kentucky rifle. These accompaniments, together with his stalwart form, and a certain wild ferocious air which was imparted to his whole appearance by the thick masses of long, coal-black hair and beard that almost concealed his entire countenance, disinclined even the boldest to interrupt his habitual silence by asking him who he was or where he was from. He would sometimes disappear

and be gone for months, no one knew where, and then he would return, and either sit about in moody silence, or spend his time in deep debauch. But the most singular and unaccountable of his freaks was, that on his return from his last excursion, which was about three months before the time of which I am writing, he brought with him a little Mexican girl, a most beautiful child, about three years old, which he carried with him wherever he went, and upon which he seemed to lavish the most affectionate tenderness.

As he sauntered slowly along on that bright, still February morning, with his rifle in his hand and the little girl perched upon his shoulder, he paused in front of one of the largest and handsomest residences in the place, from which he saw approaching him a Mexican woman, apparently some forty-eight or fifty years of age, clothed in the costume peculiar to the lower order of her country-women, and accompanied by a servant carrying a large basket. When she came up he said:

"Madam, may I ask you in the name of your sex—in the name of humanity, to take this child and keep it until you can restore it to its mother's arms again; or, if that may never be, that you will be a mother to it yourself? She is of your own sex and

country. I rescued her some three months ago from a band of Apaches, and had intended never to part with her until I could deliver her into the arms of her own mother; but I am going to the fort yonder, and I feel certain I shall never come out of it alive. I pray you take her. Take her! take her for the sake of the Blessed Virgin, whose pitying prayers you so often need—for your own mother's sake—and if you have yourself a daughter, may others deal by *her* as you shall deal with this poor innocent babe."

There was a strange pathos in the voice, and an earnestness and solemnity in the entreaty and the imprecation of the rough soldier, that went directly to the woman's heart. She hid her face in her scarf and wept—then, with the tears still trickling down her face, held out her hands to take the child; but the little thing half-frightened, flung her tiny arms around the neck of her benefactor, and clung close to his rugged bearded face, with a whimpering cry as if she would beg him not to let her be taken from him.

"She is right, poor thing!" said the woman in a sort of soliloquy; "she recalls me to myself. What protection could I give her in a few hours from now?" and then continued, addressing the rebel soldier before her: 'I had just started to the fort

myself. My husband is a patriot and a soldier, and I had resolved to do what I could to assist that little band of heroes yonder in the terrible struggle that awaits them, and if God so willed, to die with them in defence of my native land. Your appeal to me to take and keep this tender charge changed my determination, until the voice of Providence in her refusal to come to me reminded me of my duty to my country, and that by taking her I would, perhaps only be the means of exposing her along with myself, within a few hours, to the fury of a cruel and inhuman soldiery. No, we will go to the fort together, and commit her to the care of Him who is a Father to the fatherless, as well as the God of battles"—and without another word from either they went silently on their way.

They had scarcely reached the fort, when there was a summons from the Mexicans for the little garrison to surrender, which was answered by a single cannon shot; and in a few minutes fire was opened upon them from five different batteries. The bombardment continued until the morning of 3d of March; and although hundreds of shells had fallen within the inclosure, strange to say, not a single inmate of the fort had yet been touched, while on the

other hand the unerring rifles from behind the ramparts had been dealing fearful havoc in the ranks of their assailants. The small band of patriot heroes had, however, been reduced to a deplorable condition. They had undergone eight days and nights of incessant duty, their last rations had been consumed two days before; more than half their number was sick, and the remainder worn down by fatigue and hunger. In view of these circumstances Col. Travis called his men around him, and gave all such as desired to leave the fort permission to do so, but expressed the determination, so far as he was concerned, to defend it to the death. His harangue was answered by a wild cheer from his famishing soldiers, not one of whom seemed willing to leave him.

The firing from the enemy's batteries was resumed and kept up almost without intermission until the evening of the 5th, when there was another lull which lasted through the night. In the mean time the whole garrison had subsisted for five days upon a scanty supply of parched corn, and the remnant of the provisions which had been brought in the Mexican woman's basket, and which she prudently doled out in meagre quantities to each, seeming to take no

thought whatever of her own wants in the distribution of her limited store.

Just before daylight on the morning of the 6th, an attempt was made to carry the fort by storm; but the assaulting party was met before it reached the walls by a deadly volley from the Texan rifles, which stretched nearly a hundred of them on the ground, either killed or wounded, and drove the remainder back in dismay. About eleven o'clock the attempt was repeated with even more disastrous results to the assailants than before; but at half past one, having doubled their forces, and goaded to frenzy by their previous repulses, the Mexicans renewed the assault with incredible ferocity, and this time alas! with more fatal success. Disregarding the deadly fire which mowed them down like stubble, from the time they came in range until they were within a few feet of their determined foe, they moved right on to the very muzzles of the death-dealing rifles. The Texans, too closely pressed to longer load and fire, clubbed their guns and brained them as they scaled the walls or engaged them hand to hand, with bowie-knife and tomahawk, as they leaped into the fort. Conspicuous amid the frightful scene of carnage appeared "Crazy Jack," like an incarnate demon, as he swung aloft the

barrel of his heavy rifle and sent it crashing into the skulls of the thronging enemy, or sheathed his bloody knife in the bosom of some throttled foeman.

The Mexicans were at length a third time repulsed; but when they retired from the fort they left its brave commandant, the immortal Travis, dead under a heap of slain, and but six of his heroic comrades alive—the renowned Col. David Crockett, the no less celebrated Col. Bowie, the chivalrous Major Evans, "Crazy Jack" and two other privates—all of whom except Col. Bowie, who was sick in bed and unable to sit up, were bleeding from several wounds.

A few minutes after the terrible conflict had ceased, "Crazy Jack" turned toward the centre of the fort where the woman was standing with the little girl in her arms, and after walking a few steps staggered and fell heavily forward upon his face. The woman ran to him, and with the assistance of her servant turned him upon his side, and tore open his hunting shirt to give him air. As she did so she discovered in his bosom a small silver medal inscribed with the word "CELESTE;" and with a wild wail of agony, she took his head in her arms and kissed his pale brow again and again. As the reader has doubtless surmised from the first, it was John Vanderlin.

In a short time a flag of truce arrived from Gen. Castrillion, proposing to accept the surrender of the garrison as prisoners of war, and pledging the faith of his government, under authority from President Santa Anna, that they should be protected and treated as such. After a brief consultation between the three surviving officers, the terms were agreed to and in a few minutes Gen. Castrillion, surrounded by his staff and body-guard, entered the fort and received its surrender.

He shook hands with his heroic captives, put them in charge of his chief of staff, with the assurance that they had the pledge of the Mexican President for their protection, and turned to the centre of the fort where the woman was sitting on the ground, gazing sorrowfully on the pale features of John Vanderlin, whose head she still held in her lap, while the little Mexican child crowered timidly at her side. As he approached the mournful group, rendered more intensely piteous by the heaps of slaughtered lying around them, he suddenly exclaimed in Spanish:

"My God! Celeste! What are you doing here?" but before she could answer, he sprang forward and seizing the little girl in his arms, broke forth with the wildest demonstration of joy, "My child! my child!

oh! my child! my little Teresa! Celeste, where did you find my child? Oh, I am so grateful to you, my cousin."

"Your gratitude is not due to me," replied the sorrowing woman, "but to this poor dead soldier who rescued her from the Apaches; and the only return I ask at your hand for his devotion to your child, whom he saved from a destiny a million times worse than death, is that his body shall have the rites of a christian burial."

"He shall, I pledge you the word of a soldier," said the General; "but tell me in God's name how came you here?"

"You know that Alphonso is with the patriot army," she replied, "and you know what would have been my fate if I had remained at my house, with the town in the possession of your forces."

"Could you not rely upon *me*?" asked the General. "Did you not know that I would protect you"?

"I did not know that you would be in command," she replied; "and I knew Santa Anna too well to trust myself in his hands. But even had I known that you would be here to protect me, I would have devoted myself, as I have done through the last twelve awful

days, to the assistance of these dead heroes who were fighting in the same holy cause with my absent husband."

"Well, come!" said the General, "you must go to your home now. I will see that you have the most ample protection, and that this poor fellow shall have christian burial."

"I will not leave him here," said she; "I must take him with me if I go."

"Well, well," said the General; "it shall be as you wish." Whereupon he ordered a detail of soldiers to take up the body on a litter, and as they lifted it gently from the ground, he took the lady by the hand, and with his bewildered child sitting upon his arm looking up at his face in silent amazement, and then down upon the limp and motionless form of her lost benefactor, the three, accompanied by the servant, followed it slowly out of the fort.

The mournful cortege had passed out perhaps some twenty minutes or such a matter, when Santa Anna, attended by a large number of his officers, rode in. He sat upon his horse a few moments, looking around upon the piles of dead Mexicans and Texans, as they lay heaped together, and then waving his hand towards the prisoners gave a short order in a

low tone of voice; and in an instant the body of Col. Crockett was pierced by a dozen swords. The two remaining privates were shot down like dogs, and Col. Bowie butchered in his bed, but not until he had slain three of his treacherous assassins. Major Evans, now the sole survivor, ran to the powder magazine, determined to blow it up, and thus involve his infamous captors in a common destruction with himself, but was killed in the attempt. The dead bodies of the Mexicans were then removed, while those of the rebel patriots, after being horribly mutilated, were piled in the centre of the fort and burned. And thus closed the memorable tragedy of the Alamo, which, for sublime heroism on the one side, and brutal treachery and barbarity on the other, stands without a parallel in the annals of modern war.

CHAPTER VIII.

If this were a mere idle romance, instead of a simple narrative of facts, I would probably have hesitated some time before venturing to ask my courteous readers to believe that a lady of evident rank, and accustomed perhaps to a life of luxury and ease, would abandon even the bare possibility of

security in her own comfortable home, and devote herself to the cause of her country and of humanity in the very face of privation and danger and death; that, in obedience alone to the dictates of patriotism and religion, she would give up everything—even the hope of saving her own life—to become the ministering angel to her devoted countrymen, through all the horrible scenes which marked the twelve days siege and final fall of the Alamo. Not that there is anything incredible, or even improbable, in the fact itself, but because I know there are but few who have considered properly the real sublimity of heroism to which only woman can attain.

Man may be brave, as he often is, even to an utter recklessness of his own existence; yet there is nearly always more or less of selfishness at the foundation of his courage. He seldom incurs perils and privation simply and solely for the benefit of others. But there is frequently in the feeblest and most timid woman a disinterested devotion to duty—a total self-abnegation when under the inspiration of its sacred behest—which enables her to encounter with the serenest fortitude difficulties and dangers before which the boldest of us who call ourselves "the sterner sex" would quail in terror.

Especially is this true of the Roman Catholic church. In saying this, however, I would not be understood as uttering a syllable in disparagement of the noble ladies of other sects. God forbid! They are all endowed by nature with the same exalted heroism, and I confess that from my earliest youth my reverence for this peculiar trait so characteristic of the entire sex has amounted to little short of absolute idolatry; but whether it is because they are taught to keep more constantly in view the bright example of the immaculate Mother of our Blessed Saviour, or whether there is something in their religious training which impels them to greater temporal sacrifices for their Redeemer's sake, or whatever the cause may be, the candid mind is compelled to admit that the sublimest exhibitions of devoted humanity are oftener to be witnessed among the females of that demonstration than any other.

Look at that gentle being as she glides softly and noiselessly through the gloomy wards of the crowded hospital, where the air is loaded with pestilential poison, and Death is claiming his victims all around her. See how tenderly she wipes the cold dew from the pallid brow of that dying stranger. Hear her low murmuring prayer for the repose of his departing

soul, as she gently closes his glazing eye, unmindful of the insidious virus of contagion stealing in through every portal of her own system. Why is she there? Why has she given up all the sweet endearments of home and friends and kindred, and all of the allurements of wealth and fashion and ease and luxury and pleasure, to minister amidst danger and death to the wants, and to soothe the anguish of that poor, homeless, penniless, friendless sufferer? Ah! if you could catch the faint whisper that quivers upon his parched lips with his last fleeting breath, perhaps you would hear: "God bless the Sister of Charity;" and the answer of the Father to that simple prayer of her dying fellow-man, borne on the wings of his freed spirit to the Throne of Mercy is all her reward—a reward to her more priceless than all the wealth and honor and happiness that earth can give. Yes, God bless the Sister of Charity! Eulogy she needs none, but I would that I had fitting words to pay to her purity, her virtue, and her christian heroism the humble tribute of my admiration and respect.

Whoever has reflected upon such scenes as this—scenes which many of us have witness for ourselves—will find nothing strange in the devotion and fortitude of the noble woman whom the

historian of the Alamo has only mentioned as one of the four survivors of the inhuman massacre. Indeed, the revolting picture of military barbarity was frequently relieved during the Texan revolution by just such exhibitions of female humanity and courage. I remember particularly the instance of the noble hearted Mexican woman who saved the life of young Hadaway, who was one of the few who escaped the melancholy fate of the Georgia Battalion which was sent to the Old Mission. Overcome by hunger and despair, separated from his comrades, and without arms, he entered a solitary house filled with Mexican soldiers on the lookout for the fugitives of his party. Amazed at his action, and thinking him the decoy of a large body of armed men, they hurried out to provide for defense or flight as the occasion might require. In a moment the humane woman furnished him with food and conducted him to a neighboring swamp, amid a volley of shots which were fired after them. What was her fate on her return to her infuriated countrymen, after this striking act of christian charity and womanly heroism, I never learned, but Hadway made his way back to the Texan forces, survived the memorable battle of San Jacinto in which he fought, and lived long to tell of the

devoted humanity of the poor woman of the Guadalupe.

But be the facts true or not, I tell them precisely as they have been told to me. Change of position, and the motion imparted to it in removing it from the fort, restored to the body of John Vanderlin some visible signs of life; but literally worn out by the excessive fatigue and loss of sleep he had endured through the last twelve days of incessant duty, he was not fully restored to consciousness until the numerous wounds he had received in the final assault had been properly dressed by a skillful surgeon, detailed for the purpose by Gen. Castrillion, and everything arranged for him that could conduce to his recovery.

When at length the long heavy stupor had passed away sufficiently for him to realize his condition, he found himself in a large and comfortable apartment surrounded by more of the appliances of elegance and luxury than he had seen for years, while the woman who had been his companion through the awful ordeal of the Alamo sat watching by his bedside with a small golden crucifix in her hand, which she devoutly kissed when she caught the gleam of intelligence in his eye as he gazed languidly around him.

He did not speak a word, but soon sank again into a stupor, or rather a sort of troubled slumber, which from his frequent low sorrowful moanings, and the occasional knitting of his pallid brow into a fierce frown, seemed to be disturbed by the most distressing dreams. After sleeping thus for some hours he suddenly awoke, and glared wildly about him. When his eye, bright from the raging fever which had set in, fell upon the patient watcher by his side, she almost shrank from its strange unearthly light. He looked at her a moment, and said in a plaintive, pitiful, beseeching voice, "For God's sake let me die. Why did you rescue me from the death I have coveted so long, and coveted so often?" And then in the very bitterness of despair, intensified by the burning fever that scorched his brain and seared every fibre in his frame, he broke forth in the wild incoherent ravings of delirium. One moment with gleaming eye and nostril distended he would gnash his teeth and clench his hands and yell as if mingling again in the deadly conflict hand to hand, and then he would moan piteously for his mother. Sometimes a bright smile would beam out upon his writhing features, and he would talk to his little sister about their play as if he were a child again wandering hand in hand with her

along the grassy banks of the rivulet that murmured past his far off home, and then he would shout to his college mates or sing a snatch of some old song and then break off in the wild distressing laugh of the maniac.

He continued for several days in this pitiable condition, but at last the energies of his uncommonly powerful constitution again asserted their ascendency. The fever died away, reason settled back upon her throne and the invalid began a rapid convalescence. By the 27th of the month he had so far improved that his faithful nurse ventured for the first time to leave him in order to attend the services of her church. It was Palm Sunday—a calm beautiful day which seemed to brighten all nature with the glad smile of thankfulness to the great Creator; and when the kind hearted woman returned to the bedside of her suffering charge, with her whole soul suffused with the holy joy inspired by the imposing ceremonies in which she had just been an humble participant, she found him in a sound health-giving sleep. When he awoke, he lay for some time gazing silently and thoughtfully through the window upon the still, bright landscape and into the clear blue sky beyond, and then turning to his benefactress said to

her: "Madam, I am impressed with the conviction that there is some mysterious connection between you and myself—that you have had a strange and controlling influence over my destiny. The moment I met you the morning we went to the Alamo, I knew you to be the same lady I once met on ship-board nearly ten years before, notwithstanding you had assumed a garb far beneath your rank, and I had not laid eyes on you since the morning you waved me adieu from the wharf at New York. I trust, therefore, you will not consider it mere impertinent curiosity in me if I beg to know something of your history."

"By no means, my son," she replied. "I had determined myself to tell you enough of my past life to enable you to understand our relation to each other, and I have regretted ten thousand times that I did not do so when we were thrown together years ago—especially since I have met you again—for I might possibly have saved you years of misery which I see plainly you have endured. But pardon me, I will not wound you farther by dwelling upon what now alas! cannot be helped.

I am the only daughter of Don Miguel Castrillion, a gentleman of rank and a native of Spain, who came to America in the year 1785. He obtained an

extensive grant of land in this province; but being a gentlemen of fortune and culture, he preferred a more refined society than could be found among the Creoles and Indians of Texas, and consequently spent most of his time with the old French and Castilian families in New Orleans. There he became acquainted with my mother, who was a native of France, and the daughter of a gentleman of wealth named Jean Paul Benoist. A mutual attachment soon sprang up between them, and they were married on the 30th of April. 1786. After their marriage they visited France and Spain, and after spending some time returned to New Orleans. During the summer of 1788, they visited this province and while here, on the 8th of the following October, I was born and received at my baptism my mother's name—Celeste. After my birth my parents returned to New Orleans, and the following year again visited Europe; and, after spending some time in Spain, went to Paris, where they remained until the death of my mother, which took place when I was about five years of age.

On the death of my mother I was placed in charge of an aunt in Paris, and kept at school until I was twelve years old, my father in the mean time returning to America, where he spent the time in

various portions of the Spanish provinces, but principally in Texas, New Mexico, and in the settlements along the Mississippi. In the fall of 1800 he returned to Paris, and in the following spring carried me to the city of New York, where I was again placed at school for the purpose of perfecting my knowledge of the English language, and where I remained until the summer of 1806.

During my residence in New York my father, who frequently visited me there, formed the acquaintance of Vice President Burr, to whom he communicated a project he had for some time entertained of detaching Texas from the Spanish crown, and establishing there the seat of an empire which should ultimately embrace the whole of Mexico. The Vice President entered enthusiastically into the scheme, and soon became the leading spirit in the enterprise.

I will not weary you with a detail of all the plans and preparations for the expedition, but, everything being in readiness, on the 5th of August, 1806, my father, Vice President Burr, his daughter Mrs. Alston and myself, with four servants, started on our journey to the western country, none of the party more elated than myself with the idea of the conquest of Mexico.

After a somewhat laborious, but to me by no means a tedious journey, we reached the residence of Mr. Blennerhassett on a beautiful island in the Ohio River, where we remained until the arrival of Governor Alston, of South Carolina, in October. Soon after he joined us, he and his wife, who was one of the most admirable women I ever met, the Vice President, Mr. Blennerhassett and myself started for Lexington, Kentucky. On reaching there it was determined that my father should visit Spain, for what purpose I never knew. It was accordingly arranged that instead of proceeding with the expedition, I should remain with the family of a prominent friend of the cause in Kentucky until his return; but, alas! for the brightest of all earthly hopes, that return never came. He left for Europe the next morning, and I never saw him again. The government having been informed of his designs, perhaps through the agents of Mr. Jefferson, he was arrested immediately on his arrival in Spain, and thrown into prison, from which he never came out alive.

The fate of the Vice President and his ill-starred expedition are already matters of history. As for myself, I remained in the family of my friend, the

idol of the household for three years. Possessing some beauty of feature and person, and every accomplishment of which a somewhat sprightly intellect was capable, combined with the vivacity natural to an ardent temperament and a perfectly healthy physical constitution, I was admired and caressed and courted until it is not surprising that I was almost completely intoxicated with adulation. There, in the fall of 1809, I met your father. I will allude no farther to that sinful and fatal passion with which we were soon mutually inflamed, and which brought such untold misery to us both, than to say that in him it was extenuated by such temptation as he would have been more than mortal to have withstood.

When I became myself fully sensible of my misfortune, I secluded myself at once and entirely from all intercourse with society whatever, save with my generous host and his truly angelic wife, who, to their credit be it said, notwithstanding my sin, my shame and disgrace, did not abandon me in my sorrow, or drive me out to buffet alone the scorn and contumely of an unpitying world, and to sink down, down, down in degradation and wretchedness, and finally into everlasting woe, but continued to shield

me with their pity and protection.

Our child was born on the 3d of September, 1810, and in memory of my sainted mother, whom I had lost so young, I called her name CELESTE.

Some months after this event I learned by accident that my aunt, with whom, as I have said, I had spent several of my earlier years, had settled in New Orleans. I wrote to her at once and soon received a letter from her in reply, pressing me in the most affectionate terms to come to her without delay. I conferred immediately with your father, who not only furnished me with an elaborate outfit and made every arrangement that could be devised to render my journey agreeable and safe, but insisted on taking our little daughter and adopting her into his own family. It cost me the bitterest struggle I ever experienced in my life to give up my child; but I yielded at length to his suggestions, and how his plans were carried out you already know.

It was a tedious trip to make in those days, but I reached New Orleans in safety, without any unusual accident or delay, and was welcomed with the utmost joy by my aunt, who took me into her family and her heart. I had been under the hospitable roof of my aunt but a few weeks when I was introduced to a

handsome and accomplished young Spaniard named Alphonso de Zavala, a near relative of Vice President Zavala, and a gentleman of extensive fortune as well as reputable family. Our acquaintance speedily ripened into love, and in a few months, with the fullest approbation of my kind-hearted relative and benefactress, we were married; and from that day to the present I have found in him every noble quality a woman could desire in a husband.

On the morning after our marriage we sailed for Europe, and while in Paris we formed the acquaintance of an American painter of considerable distinction of your own name—John Vanderlyn—whose pictures already adorn the Louvre, and who for his achievements in art had been decorated with a medal of honor by the Emperor Napoleon. He was an old friend and ardent admirer of Vice President Burr and his daughter, Mrs. Theodosia Alston; and when he learned of my own former acquaintance and romantic association with them, he became at once warmly attached to both my husband and myself, and as a token of his esteem he one day presented me a miniature portrait of myself which he had painted on ivory, and which he considered his masterpiece. The picture was so exquisite, both as a

likeness and as a work of art, that my husbund had it set in gold as it was when I sent it by you to my daughter.

Upon our return to America I recovered a large portion of my father's fortune, which combined with that of my husband was sufficient to have enabled us to spend the remainder of our lives in easy affluence, as indeed it still remains; but he soon became involved in schemes for the independence of Texas, which have continued to occupy his mind to the present moment. When I met you nearly ten years ago, he had been at the city of Washington on a mission for the promotion of plans for that purpose, which might have been successfully carried out long ago but for the foolhardy outbreak of Hayden Edwards and his comrades a short time before I there saw you. On the breaking out of the present war, conscious of his own want of military education and experience, he refused all offers of command tendered him by the government, and enlisted in the ranks, where he is now doing duty as a private soldier in defense of the liberties of his adopted country, which will yet, an an independent and mighty nation, honor him for his valor and his devotion as they deserve."

Alas! poor woman! Little dreamed she of the horrible fate which had already snatched that gallant, noble husband from her embrace forever. Little did she suspect that at the dawn of that same bright, balmy, beautiful Palm Sunday, while he and five hundred and eleven other devoted patriots were issuing from the sally-port at Goliad, disarmed under the perfidious forms of capitulation, and under the cruel delusion that they were to return to the bosom of their families until exchanged as prisoners of war, they were received between double ranks of cavalry and infantry, marched to a spot fit for the inhuman deed, and there without a moment to think of home, wife, mother, children, friends or God, brutally and treacherously butchered in cold blood. Little did she think that at that very moment the manly form upon which she had so often gazed in exultant pride, and the handsome features she had so often kissed with all the thrilling rapture of a woman's love, were charred and blackened by the remorseless flames which devoured what the traitorous steel had so pitilessly mangled.

But lest I grow tedious, if indeed I have not already become so, I must hasten this curious history to a close. The Texan revolution was virtually

consumated on the 21st of the following April (1836), in the romantic victory of San Jacinto, which not only ranks among the decisive battles of the world, but holds the first place in the catalogue of military miracles. In that wonderful conflict seven hundred undisciplined troops, armed with rifles, muskets, pistols and bowie-knives, and led by a commander who had never seen service except as a subaltern, in the open face of day marched across a smooth prairie to attack over twelve hundred veterans, thoroughly drilled, splendidly equipped, posted in a wood with their flanks protected and their front entrenched, and commanded by the victorious chieftain of a hundred battle-fields. Yet in twenty minutes the position was carried, the combat became a carnage; the hyacinths from which the spot had taken its name were crimson with the blood of six hundred of the invaders who lay dead upon the ground; six hundred more, half of them wounded, together with their President and Commander-in chief, were prisoners, and their entire camp captured; while the loss to the victors was only six killed and twenty wounded.

While Mrs. Zavala deeply mourned the terrible fate of her heroic husband, she continued to watch over

John Vanderlin with the most affectionate interest until he was entirely recovered, and then retired to a convent, where she devoted the remainder of her life exclusively to deeds of charity, and the most sacred services of her church.

The husband of Celeste not only attained the distinction in his profession of which his talents and habits of business gave early promise, but occupied during his life several positions of prominence under the government, in all of which his estimable wife was his ornament and pride, as she was ever his efficient adviser and assistant.

John Vanderlin remained in Texas for several years after the establishment of her independence, leading a wild and reckless sort of life, though invariably kind and inoffensive to others, and finally returned to Kentucky. Celeste and her husband offered to transfer to him his father's fortune, but he declined to receive any part of it. On his return to his native State he became a sober, quiet, exemplary man, and remains so to this day. Soon after he got back he renewed his acquaintance with me, and many and many a time has he told over to me the strange romantic incidents in the history of his family and himself as I have endeavored to state them.

The last time I saw him was a few months before the death of my poor friend Richard Savage. I was standing on the platform in front of the Guthrie House when he stepped off the down train, and slapped me familiarly on the shoulder with his old-fashioned hearty, "Hello, Riffe," as he came up behind me. But how changed was his appearance from what it was when I first saw him—his tall form no longer rounded out with youthful vigor, but slightly stooping under the weight of years of melancholy; his locks no longer black as the wing of night, but thin and white as snow; yet his face when in repose wore the same singular expression it had always done since his return from Texas—the air of one who is vainly endeavoring to recall to memory something he has forgotten years ago.

"Come," said he, "and take a glass of wine with me." I did so, and as we came out again on the platform, busily asking and answering questions as to each other's welfare, Captain Sweeney called, "All aboard." We shook hands with a heart-felt good bye from each as he stepped upon the train, and as it sped away I stood gazing after it until it was out of sight, watching the white wreaths of steam as they faded out upon the face of the calm blue sky. As I did so, I

could not help thinking: such is the life of man, with all its hopes, its joys and its sorrows, its happiness and its misery, its schemes of ambition, its dreams of love, its bitter disappointments and despair, a fleeting unsubstantial vapor, exhaled in a moment to pass away without leaving a trace behind.

FIRST PROTRACTED MEETING EVER HELD IN LIBERTY, KENTUCKY.

A REMINISCENCE

All who have visited the town of Liberty will remember it is situated on a beautiful level about two hundred yards north of Green River, and some fifty or sixty feet above high water mark. At the time of which I write the old log Courthouse had been torn down and a substantial brick built in its place upon the Public Square, but the latter had not been finished. It was not plastered nor painted, and contained only a few rude seats. There was no other house upon the Square except an old wooden jail, for which there was seldom any use, and that has long since been torn away, and one erected in its stead better in keeping with the necessities of an advancing civilization; that is, much stronger and capable of accommodating more people.

The town contained about thirty voters, embracing two doctors, two lawyers, two dry goods merchants, two fiddlers, two excellent flutists, two

tavern keepers and a sufficient number of mechanics. Facilities for amusement suitable to the tastes of the inhabitants were abundant. We had a ball alley, race track, shooting ground, ball room and a dancing school which turned out the very best of dancers. In politics the town was about equally divided between the old Whig and Democratic parties, and although political discussion was a favorite evening amusement it never, that I remember, led to any personal ill will. In fact, there was a universal personal friendship and social good feeling pervading the whole community. None of us were rich, but we all had plenty to enable us to live comfortably and happily—and we enjoyed it. The men were hardy, honest, industrious and generous hearted, and the women were all healthy, frugal and contented; each thinking she had the best husband in the world, who in turn was satisfied that he had the prettiest and smartest wife in existence.

Such is a very imperfect, but as far as it goes, a truthful sketch of the little town of Liberty in the fall of 1837, when a Cumberland Presbyterian preacher by the name of Laban Jones made an appointment to preach there on a certain day. I should have remarked that there was no meeting house in the town, or in five miles of it, consequently we knew very little

about, and cared less, for preachers of any denomination, and paid no attention to the appointment I have mentioned. On the contrary, we had made a previous appointment for a shooting match on that day, and the whole country round, both great and small, had come to attend it. We shot on until late in the evening, when most of the country people dispersed and went home; and just as the sun was sinking in the west, and I was shading the sight for one of the marksmen with my hat, a stranger rode past into the town. None of us knew who he was, and none of us cared—we had had a good evening's sport, and were intent only upon our luck, good or ill as the case happened to be. As for myself I had had fine luck—I had won most of the beef—and, as I was one of the hotel-keepers, I bought the balance, and we adjourned to the bar to take a parting drink, I leading the way, and proposing to treat all hands; for I was in a fine humor and wanted to be popular with the boys anyhow. So I set out the bottles and invited everybody to take hold; and while we were laughing and talking over our day's fun, a little boy came and told me that Miss Julia (my wife) wished to see me in her room.

My wife was young and handsome and noted for

her kindness and courtesy to every one—and I loved her above everything else on earth—so I hastened at once to her room, and when I reached the door I took off my hat and said, "What is thy petition, and it shall be granted thee; and what is thy request and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom." She laughed merrily, and replied, "If I have found favor in thy sight, O King, and if it pleases the King, I would like for you to shut up that bar-room immediately. Mr. Fitzpatrick has just sent word that there will be preaching at the Court-house to-night; and, as the preacher and some other company are at his house, he would be glad if you would have the house swept out, and the seats arranged, and everything in order." I told her all right; to have early supper and we would all go.

I went back to the bar-room, and told the boys we must close up and make ready for going to meeting, insisting that they should all go. They all, however, began to excuse themselves. Some said they lived in the country and must go home. Some had made arrangements to shoot by candlelight, and some to have a game of "old sledge." I told them there was a time for all things, and now that they had a chance they ought to go to meeting; and if they did not I

would be blamed for it. Finding everything else of no avail, I at length proposed that I would "treat" every one that would go, not only then but again in the morning, provided they should behave themselves like gentlemen; and with the understanding that if any of them misbehaved he should never have anything more to drink at my bar, and that I would thrash him in the bargain. Several of them took the bounty and I closed the door, put the key in my pocket and put off with the bar-keeper and a black boy, with brooms to sweep and dust the Court-house and put things in order—especially the seats which consisted simply of loose planks placed upon blocks. By the time we had finished, the bell rang for supper and there was a general rush for the table, and as our meal was dispatched, we started all hands for church.

My wife took two candlesticks and some half dozen or more candles, with some forks to fasten them against the walls. The lantern was lighted and carried along to light the candles with—for such a thing as matches or coal-oil lamps was not heard of in that section for years afterwards. I constituted myself not only sexton for the occasion, but marshal or conservator of the peace pro tem.; for we had but one magistrate, and no constable or other peace officer in

the town, and our only magistrate, who was a good clever man who loved whiskey wonderfully, was in no condition to attend meeting. I set the two candlesticks on a little table on the judge's stand, which was about three feet high, twenty feet long and seven feet wide, in order to give room for all the magistrates on County Court days. The balance of the candles were stuck around the walls and against a poplar post in the center of the house with forks.

The congregation as well as the preacher soon arrived. I can still see in my mind's eye Joel Sweeney, the Clerk of the Circuit and County Courts, who was certainly one of the purest hearted and most perfect gentlemen the world ever produced, sitting there with his amiable and excellent wife just in front of the stand. Several others of us sat near but the boys whom I had hired to attend were scattered about over the house, the most of them rather far back, where even the dim light was dimmer.

The preacher at length arose and said, "We will introduce the worship of God by singing the following hymn:

'Broad is the road that leads to death,
And thousands walk together there;
But wisdom shows a narrow path,
With here and there a traveler.' "

After reading the hymn through in the most solemn and impressive manner, he looked around over the dimly lighted congregation and said he would thank some friend to set the tune. Joel Sweeney and myself had been in the habit of meeting occasionally on Sunday evenings to practice singing out of an old note book then in fashion called the "Missouri Harmony;" and as Joel was rather the best hand at it, I nodded at him to begin, and to let him understand that I would help him. Joel was a powerful diffident man, but after clearing his throat a time or two, he started in on a key at least three or four notes too high, and with a faint trembling voice struggled through the first bar, when I followed on a key fully as much too low; and the preacher seeing the difficulty by the time we got to the second line started in, and split the difference between us. It was very plain that the preacher had not the gift of singing to any great extent, and our wives instead of turning in and helping us sat by with their heads hung down and never sang a note. The preacher lined out the second verse, and we started in as before; but as we had but the one hymn-book in the crowd, Joel and I forgot the words and played out on the first line, leaving the preacher to get through the balance

by himself the best way he could. Whereupon he laid down the book and said that owing to our bad colds we would defer singing for the present. I never felt more relieved in my life, for several had already laughed outright at our failure, while I detected a smile upon the faces of even the most staid of the congregation.

The preacher then said he wished every christian present who desired that we should have a good meeting would rise. Up got 'Squire John Fitzpatrick and two very old ladies, one of whom was a visitor to our town, and both of them rather small in size. He told them to take their seats, and after snuffing the candles on the table with his thumb and finger, he remarked that God had promised that where two or three were gathered together in His name, there would He be in the midst of them; and we had barely got the number. "You have not got it," called out Bob McFall, who sat back in one corner against the wall; "for two old women won't count for more than one, and Old Jack is a hypocrite."

Old Jack was a wonderfully high-tempered man, who had been a great fighter in his day, and old as he was would take that from no man on earth; so he sprang to his feet, and was about to make for McFall

when I caught him by the arm and said, "Hold on, 'Squire, hold on, I will attend to him myself." So, going back to him, I rammed his head back against the wall a time or two and said, "Look here, my good fellow, I hired you to come to meeting to-night with the understanding that you were to behave yourself like a gentleman. Not another drop will you get unless you behave yourself and ask Jack's pardon to boot; and, more than that, if you don't do it, I'll whip you in the morning, certain; and if you just say turkey, I'll do it now."

Bob didn't say a word, but gave me to understand that he was done. The preacher waited patiently till I got through, and when I had again taken my seat he led off in prayer. What was the cause of it I do not know, whether it resulted from some defect in his vocal organs, or merely from the force of habit I never understood; but there was one peculiarity in the preacher's delivery that I never heard of in that of any other person, and that was, that at the end of every sentence he uttered after he had gotten warmed up he gave a loud bleat.

This peculiarity so disturbed us at first that we failed to appreciate his prayer, the effect of which was finally totally ruined by some of the fellows

behind us calling out aloud, "That's the Lamb, I know it by his bleat." I was about to get up to regulate him, when my wife caught hold of me and pulled me down, with the worst pinch I ever had in my life. She whispered to me that she was utterly ashamed of me, and wished she was at home, and would never be caught in that Court-house again.

The preacher waited until all was quiet again, and until I had gone round and snuffed all the candles with my finger and thumb, and then took his text: "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"

He repeated his text three times, solemnly, deliberately and distinctly; and, explaining why it was printed and what it represented for about twenty minutes, in a plain, earnest and striking manner, he shut up the Bible, and laid his hymn-book on it, as though he had no further use for either of them, and commenced pouring out a stream of eloquence such as I had never listened to before; never pausing for an idea or hesitating for a word, but pouring right on like a rushing surging, resistless torrent. I looked up at him. His countenance had entirely changed.

I would not have known him as the same man. His

eyes were blazing, his face had turned as white as death, and a large vein from his nose to the top of his forehead had distended itself until it looked like a cord. He seemed to have known us all of our lives, even better than we did ourselves, even to our most secret thoughts, and exposed our iniquities in language that almost made the hair stand on end. He described our agonies of fear and remorse when we should be trembling on the brink of the grave. He went with us through the dark waters of death to the judgment seat, and described our trial; arrayed the witnesses against us one by one, beginning with the Bible, and dwelt upon the testimony of each until we sat debased and condemned in our own judgment. And when he came to the final sentence of the Great Judge, I never heard anything like it from mortal man. I have heard sentence pronounced on criminals at the bar when the whole court was bathed in tears; but everything of the kind I ever witnessed sinks into insignificance when compared to the awful denunciation which came hot and withering from his pale lips.

But he did not stop there. He went on to describe us condemned, bound and delivered over to the great prison-keeper of hell. He pictured the mournful

profession of miserable, hopeless, lost souls led down to the arid, desolate shores of the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, and our final plunge into its hissing, seething floods. I cannot pretend to give anything like an idea of his description of the torments of the damned, though the language in which he drew the horrid picture will ring in my ears until my dying day. But what was most singular of all was, the strange unnatural *bleat* that followed every sentence seemed to be exactly right, and to come in exactly at the right time to make the whole thing complete.

Some of the boys that had been making sport of it at first seemed almost carried away by fright. They ran down to the old horse-mill where some of the fellows were playing "old sledge" and told them that there was a wild man up at the Court-house, who had changed entirely in his looks within an hour; that he was nothing like he was an hour ago, and they ought to come and see him. They threw down their cards and came running; and were soon gaping in wonder and terror as the burning words poured from his mouth like the steady flow of the torrent over some great cataract. If John the Baptist had risen from the dead, or the angel which the evangelist saw coming

down from the heavens clothed in a cloud, placing one foot upon the land and the other upon the sea and swearing that time should be no more, had made his appearance, I don't believe our people would have been worse scered than they were. He finally closed for the night, and requested us all to meet him there the next day at ten o'clock.

I have thought about it a thousand times, and it has always seemed strange to me that neither my wife nor myself spoke a word about the preacher, the sermon or anything that had taken place in the meeting. We walked home slowly and silently, and retired without alluding in any way to what we had just seen and heard. My wife soon fell into a sort of troubled slumber, frequently moaning and starting up during the night as if burdened with the weight of some deep and terrible sorrow. As for myself, sleep was a thing entirely out of the question. The clear yet peculiar voice of the strange preacher was constantly ringing in my ears; and, whenever I shut my eyes, his remarkable features, pale from the intensity of intellectual excitement, and his eyes blazing with the fires of genius, appeared before me just as plainly as while they riveted my gaze during his sermon. I could even see around him the dim yellow light of the

tallow candles.

We were up early the next morning about our domestic affairs, but both as silent and thoughtful as when we came from the meeting the night before.

At ten o'clock the people poured into the Court-house. My folks all went early, but as I had to stay at home to receive such guests as might come in, I did not go until some time after preaching had commenced. When I got there I found that J. C. Portman, a preacher of considerable celebrity in those days, had arrived, with several fine lady singers from near Middleburg, besides Mr. Coffey, and old man Anderson from Hustonville, and a number from Russell county, The house was crowded and I stood afar off, but transfixed even at that distance.

The same strange preacher was again on the stand, and it seemed to me that his eloquence was even more wonderful than it was the night before. I could compare it to nothing but the rushing of a mighty tempest, and sometimes his sentences seemed to burst upon the ear like the most startling claps of thunder. The men sat trembling like aspen leaves, and the women were as pale as rigid corpses.

When he got through, Portman, who was a great revivalist, and had the sweetest voice you ever heard,

took up the other side, and showed the beauties of Heaven, and implored the congregation to come and enjoy them as an inheritance through all eternity, freely, without money, and without price. If I ever heard anything to exceed that description in the beauty and simplicity of his language, I can't remember it. And then the sweet plaintive tones of his voice were like some of those pleasing but mournful old melodies that make you cry in spite of yourself, you know not why. In fact, he had the whole house in tears.

When he closed his remarks, the Old Preacher arose and said that if there was one in the congregation who desired an interest in his prayers, he would ask that one to meet him in front of the stand. As he started down, I noticed a lady rise and start in that direction, followed by a number of others. When she turned so I could see her face I saw it was my wife. My feelings at the moment it would be impossible to describe. At first my heart seemed to stand perfectly still, and then there was a choking in my throat that I could not swallow down to save my life. But in spite of that feeling, the thought popped into my mind and I could not get it out, that I was utterly undone; that all my pleasures were gone

forever; that our party was broken up; no more balls; no more dancing; no more shooting-matches; no more fun of any kind for me in this world.

At the request of the old man, nearly everybody in the house knelt down, and he commenced a prayer that it would be vain to attempt to describe. I have heard thousands in my time, but never anything like that either before or since. Such earnestness! Such fervor! Such a petition as he put up for the forgiveness of those poor sinners, no lawyer ever made at the bar, to save a miserable trembling culprit from being hung. When at length he seemed to prostrate himself at the very foot of the Eternal Throne, and implored the Father to save them for the sake of his Son who had died for them, the effect was perfectly overpowering. Old Man Anderson, a good pious old man, clapped his hands and shouted at the top of his voice, "Glory to God! Glory to God in the highest for the gift of his Son!" and tears streamed down like rain from hundreds of eyes that had not wept for years before.

There was preaching again in the evening at 3 o'clock, and again at night; but for fear of growing tedious I will pass them by, although the exercises were fully as interesting as those I have already

mentioned. By Sunday morning the fame of the strange man had spread even to the hill country beyond Green River, and people from far and wide came pouring in to hear him. By ten o'clock the house was full and running over. The doors and windows were crowded, and hundreds were standing around on the outside as close to the wall as they could get, to hear what he said. I was afraid of the preachers, and had become afraid of my wife, and had kept out of her way for two days; so I stood afar off, but still close enough to see and hear everything that was going on; and I never can forget the looks or the language of the Old Preacher on that morning. His text was, "Oh! that they were wise, that they would understand this, that they would consider their latter end;" and if what I had already heard seemed wonderful, the sermon which followed was absolutely supernatural. Such speaking of *any* kind, I never heard before and never have listened to since. I have heard Tom Chilton, Waller, Warriner, Poltson, Stearman, Rice, Blackburn and Bascom, and hosts of the greatest preachers Kentucky ever produced; I have heard Clay, Crittenden and Helm, the Moreheads, the Marshalls, the Breckinridges, and Ben Hardin and John Pope, and many others of the

greatest orators in and out of our State;—but I tell you candidly that such eloquence I never heard from any of them, or anything that could compare with what fell from that old man's lips that day. To describe it I will not even try, for I have not got the language to do it.

Portman followed him with one of his most beautiful and touching exhortations; and when he stretched out his hands and said in the plaintive pleading tones of his singularly sweet voice, "Oh turn, sinner, turn! May the Lord *help* you turn," the old man started from the stand saying: "I am coming down one time more to plead with our Heavenly Father to blot out our sins and transgressions and remember them against us no more forever." There was a very large old man with a bald head in the congregation, named James Farris, who on account of his great size and excessive flesh, went by the name of "Big Dad." He was a great gambler, and I don't suppose had heard a sermon before for twenty years, or more, but he came that day out of curiosity and had taken his place up near the "anxious seat." So when he saw the old man start down off the stand, "Big Dad" gathered his cane and started out. The preacher stopped and looked at him a moment with a

look that will haunt me to my dying day, and said, "Ah, my old bald-headed friend, you may run *now*, but the day cometh when you *shall* stand!" The exclamation thrilled me to the marrow, and almost curdled my blood. "Big Dad" himself actually reeled under it and would have fallen, but some young man who was a stranger in our midst caught him and helped him out of the house, and that was the last we ever saw of him. He died a few days afterwards.

During the prayer that followed a host of mourners crowded around him, and among them the wealthiest and most fashionable women in all the country round, in their silks and satins and jewelry, all down on their knees in the dust, having lost all thought of everything save their souls' salvation.

The meeting continued with the repetition of pretty much the same scenes and exercises I have already attempted to describe, until the ensuing Thursday, the day the old man had set to leave us. Up to that time thirty-six had professed religion; and leaving them to be baptized by Portman and Coffey, he bade us farewell with the hope that we would all meet him in Heaven. As he mounted his horse and rode away, we all felt a sort of indescribable sadness; perhaps something like that which the men of Galilee

experienced when they stood gazing up into the heavens. He had come among us a stranger unbidden by any of us; he had impressed us all with the strange power of his mighty genius, and now as we watched his receding form, we felt a presentiment that we should never meet him again in this world. And so it turned out. The sound of his voice was never heard there any more, and he has long since been called to reap the reward of his labors.

At three o'clock that evening the rite of baptism was to be administered to the recently converted, and as they had all preferred to be immersed, a line was formed, two and two, the preachers in front, the ladies next, and the men bringing up the rear. In this order the whole congregation marched down to the river, where Old Brother Anderson offered up a most feeling prayer, after which a song was sung. While the candidates were being prepared, Dr. Coffey, who was one of the finest-looking men you ever saw, delivered a splendid exhortation, in which he drew one of the most vivid pictures of the baptism of our Blessed Savior by John the Baptist, it seemed to me, that could have been painted by the most fervid imagination. I was in a sort of dreamy melancholy mood, and I almost imagined that I was standing on

the banks of the Jordan, surrounded by the vast multitude that went out from Jerusalem and all the region round about, on that memorable occasion when the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God descended like a dove and nestled upon the Savior of the world, and a voice was heard from Heaven, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The ladies, having loaded their dresses with lead, in order to make them sink, marched to the water's edge, two and two; and as they one, by one, sank gently and gracefully beneath the water, while every thing around was as still as the grave, I thought it was one of the most solemn and beautiful sights my eyes ever beheld. My wife was the first, and when the minister laid his left hand upon her shoulder, raised his right toward heaven and said in an humble, but at the same time the sweetest voice you ever heard, "My sister, I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," I almost fainted. I was standing at the time some distance off with my arm around a sapling, or I do believe I should have fallen. I felt like my wife had forsaken me, and I was alone.

Coffey led them into the water, Portman baptized

them and Old Brother Anderson took them by the hands and helped them out. The thirty-six were all baptized in less than one third of the time in which I thought it could have been done, and the congregation reverently received the benediction. Then followed a scene of hurry and confusion. People bidding each other farewell and starting for home in every direction. The crowd rapidly grew thinner and thinner, until the last had disappeared, and then the town was the lonesomest place I ever saw in my life. Every door was shut, and not a soul to be seen, or a sound to be heard. All was silent as midnight. I sat for some time with a feeling of utter desolation, too heart-sickening for words to express, until at length it occurred to me that I would go to the bar and take a big drink. But when I opened the door the very smell of the bar-room made me sick; so I locked it up and turned away without going in. I went to my room and sat down, and looked out upon the now fading landscape, with the strange voice of old man Jones constantly ringing in my ears, and his flashing burning eye looking still into my own, turn in what direction I would. After a while my wife came noiselessly into the room and gliding gently to my side, placed her arms around my neck, kissed me and said, "Oh my

darling husband, I love you a thousand times more now than I ever did before; if I have offended you, forgive me." Then for the first time the tears came to my eyes. I wept like a child.

In a short time we sold the tavern and a portion of our furniture for a good price, and returned to our farm seven miles up on Green River, where we lived and prospered for many years quietly and happily. But now alas! how changed! My loving wife, whom I adored above all earthly things, has gone to the upper and better world. My children are scattered, and I am left *alone*!—for what purpose I know not. I hope it is for a good one.

Gentle reader, this simple unpretending sketch has not been attempted without a purpose. Imperfect as it is, it may possibly give you some idea of society in some parts of our State but a few years ago, and of scenes which will be perhaps but seldom if ever witnessed again in our midst. With this little picture of the past you can compare the present. It would look strange *now* to see the most wealthy and fashionably dressed ladies down upon their knees, upon the floor without a carpet, wringing their hands in an agony of repentance and remorse for past sins, or shaking hands with each other, and with their

husbands and their children, all renewing their pledges to meet each other in heaven. It would seem so odd and unfashionable! But at the time, and among the people of whom I have written, such were the ordinary manifestations of religious convictions, or of a joyous hope of an eternity in Heaven, where I hope I may meet you all. Farewell.

A CHAPTER FROM REAL LIFE FORTY-SEVEN YEARS AGO.

I have read but few novels in my life, but from the few I have had a chance to read I am satisfied that the best romance that was ever written is that which comes the nearest being a true picture of what we have all seen at some time or other in real life. The fact is, human nature is a curious thing; and I have sometimes thought that human life, with all its joys and sorrows, its loves and rivalries, its hopes and disappointments, is but little else than a tale that is told. In illustration of this I will endeavor to beguile a few hours of pain and suffering which I incurred from a recent and somewhat dangerous accident, by relating, in my own rude way, an incident which came under my observation in my early manhood.

One of the most estimable men I ever knew in my life was Colonel Jesse Coffey, who lived and died in Casey county, near the Lincoln line. He was not only an intelligent, affable, dignified gentleman, of far more than average talents, but brave and honorable to

the last degree. When about twenty-five years of age, he bade adieu to his young and beautiful wife, with four lovely children, and followed the gallant Shelby in the war of 1812. In the memorable battle of the Thames, which occurred on the 5th day of October, 1813, he was wounded at the head of his company but not so badly as to compel him to quit the fight in which his bravery continued to distinguish him till its close, nor to prevent him, after the smoke of the conflict had cleared away, from helping to bear from the field the bleeding forms of Colonel R. M. Johnson and Colonel James Davison, while old Colonel Whitley, of Stanford, and the renowned Tecumseh, lay within a few feet of each other dead upon the ground.

The war closed, as everybody knows, with the wonderful victory at New Orleans, on the 8th of January, 1815, which made the name of Jackson immortal, and sent the remains of Packenham back to England in a hogshead of rum; and on the return of Captain Coffey to his family he received from the Governor, as an acknowledgment of his patriotism and gallantry, a commission as Colonel, which he honored by accepting it, and wore with dignity the title it conferred until the day of his death.

The return of peace brought with it the blessings of prosperity, but to none more generously than to Colonel Coffey. By close attention to business, and a course of strictly honorable dealing with all classes of his fellow-men, his wealth continued to increase, while he continued to grow in public esteem until the year 1827 found him one of the most popular men that ever lived in any community, in possession of an ample fortune, blest with the love of a most affectionate wife, and surrounded by a family of healthy, handsome, intelligent children, besides a large number of valuable and contented slaves. His homestead in fact presented one of those pleasing examples of a perfectly regulated domestic economy which at that day were so often to be met with in our State, but which at this time it would perhaps be very difficult to find. His house was the home of hospitality, and his table was always loaded with the fruits of rural thrift. His barns and his stock always indicated the oversight of the careful husbandman, while his family was comfortably clothed in the products of home industry. His children were provided with all the educational advantages the community afforded, and such of their reasonable wants as could not be met by the immediate produce

of the farm, were amply supplied by the abundant surplus which, notwithstanding the want of railroads and turnpikes, was always sure to find a market. Taken all in all, Colonel Coffey's might well have been considered the model home of its day and time.

But the jewel of the household was his daughter Polly, at the time of which I write a beautiful, blooming girl about nineteen years of age, sprightly, industrious and accomplished far beyond the majority of her sex in the neighborhood, and withal amiable and modest almost to a fault.

The Colonel, finding it necessary to build a larger house for the comfort of his family, as well as a mill for the accommodation of himself and the neighborhood generally, employed a young man named Vardiman to lay the foundations and build the chimneys for the one, and a young man named Pleasants to take charge of the work on the other. These young men, who lived about twenty-five miles off, were near neighbors, and had been warm friends from their earliest infancy, and two handsomer or higher-toned young fellows than they were you never saw in your life. They had both seen a good deal of the world, and, were as well qualified, both by nature and culture, to make themselves agreeable in society

as any two young men I ever met with. Besides, they were both remarkably steady, industrious, hard-working young fellows; for although their parents were in fine fix, so far as property was concerned, they lived at a time when it was not considered a disgrace to a gentleman to make his living by the sweat of his brow, as God Almighty ordained that he should do. They had not been in the neighborhood long until they became the general favorites of all classes, male and female, old and young. They were always together, and at meeting, or at a party, or around the fireside, or wherever they might be, they were always so remarkably polite and courteous and gentlemanly in their manners, it was impossible for the neighbors to decide which of them was better entitled to their respect. With the young people, especially with the girls of the neighborhood, they stood very high; they were so kind, and considerate, and so smooth and polished in their address; but what probably made the young ladies show them more attention than they would otherwise have done was the singular fact no amount of management could ever entice either of them to say a single word in the way of courtship to any of them. But with nobody did they stand higher than with the

Colonel. He was a powerful pushing business man himself, and he liked their prompt, industrious, business habits, so when they wished to go anywhere the negroes were ordered to bring out the best horses and saddles on the place for them to ride, and every kindness and attention that any gentleman could desire was shown them by the whole family.

Some time in the fall Vardiman finished his work and the Colonel paid him off, expressing many regrets at having to part with him and extending a most cordial invitation for him to make his house his home at any and all times he might see proper. I happened to be there on the morning he started for home and a more remarkable leave-taking I never witnessed. Every living soul on the plantation, niggers and all, down to the smallest child that could walk, came out to bid him good-bye. After shaking hands all round he mounted his horse and rode off, and I sat on the porch with Polly and my sister Leannah, who was her own cousin, and almost the exact image of her, and watched him until he got out of sight. Twice as he rode down the avenue he paused as if he had forgotten something for which he wished to turn back, but finally he spurred his horse into a gallop and in a few moments was beyond our view.

After he was gone there seemed to be a sort of cloud over the household, but Pleasants was the lonesomest looking man I ever saw. He seemed for several days to have nothing to say to anybody, but when not engaged at his work on the mill, he wandered about like he was looking for some thing he could not find, he knew not what. At length, however, he seemed to cheer up, and before a great while it began to be whispered about that he was setting to Polly, and the neighbors and kinfolks with one accord set about encouraging the match.

After Vardiman left, Pleasants and myself became much more intimate than we had previously been, so when he had finished his job, about the first of March, he took me into his confidence and imparted to me as a secret, what I had for some time suspected, that he and my Cousin Polly were engaged and would soon be married. He moreover gave me a pressing invitation to attend the "*infair*," and a general commission to take as many of the boys and girls of the neighborhood as I could get to go with me, for he had understood that the Colonel intended to give a big wedding, and, as his father was rich and able to stand it, he did not intend to be outdone. He went home to prepare for the wedding, and shortly

afterwards returned to see his intended bride, and get the Colonel's consent for the issual of the license. I met him on the visit, and I am confident I never saw a man more completely transported with his prospects of happiness, either before or since. He was full of it. He was delighted with everything, and dwelt with special pleasure upon the fact that his friend Vardiman approved his choice and would "wait on" him at the wedding. When we parted he again urged me to be sure and get as many as possible to go to the infair.

Time wore on until it brought the day before the one which had been fixed for the marriage. I was young and enthusiastic, and my whole soul was alive with the prospect of the fine time which I was so soon to have with the other young folks at the wedding and infair, and I had been for weeks saving up my eagle halves and quarters for the emergency. (By the way, what has become of all of those old familiar coins that used to jingle in the pockets of almost every boy and nigger in the country? Have they, too, with so many other things, gone down into the tomb of a generation that is past, to be resurrected only by the final trump of the last angelic herald?) Well, on the day before the wedding, I went

over to the Colonel's, where Polly and my sister, who was to wait on her, were busy making up their finery for the grand occasion. I say grand occasion, for it was really to be such. The Colonel had sent out his invitations through all the country round, bidding those who holp him to raise his barn and mill, together with their wives and children, to the feast which he had prepared with almost princely bounty. I found the girls diligently engaged with their sewing, and neither saying a word. My sister had a sort of troubled look, though I could see she was trying her best to let on like nothing was the matter, but Polly's countenance wore an expression of deep unearthly sadness, such as no human being can describe. Thoughtless and rattle-brained as I was, it threw a damper over my feelings such as I had never felt before. I thought it my duty, however, to cheer her up, so I took up one of the frills, or something of the sort, which they had been making, and flinging it over her head and around her neck made some complimentary remark about her beauty, and Pleasants' extraordinary good luck in getting such a prize, but that he was worthy of it, for he was one of the very best fellows in the world, and any girl ought to be glad to get him; but my words seemed only to

deepen the shadow that rested upon her brow. She got up and left the room without saying a word, and in a few minutes my sister followed her, so I struck out for home oppressed with the presentiment that something was going to happen, I could not tell what, but struggling all the time to hope that everything would turn out right.

That same morning Vardiman left word with Pleasants to say to the large party of friends who were to go with them to the wedding, that he had some pressing business down on Green River, which he would go on and attend to, and meet them all at the Colonel's the next day. Pleasants was loth to lose his company on the road, but finding nothing else would do, at last consented, but urged him to allow no business or accident to prevent his being on hand to wait on him, for he wouldn't miss it for anything in the world. Vardiman promised him he would do so if life lasted and rode away. He went on, attended to his business, whatever it was, and just after night-fall reached the Colonel's, where he knew he would be more than welcome for the night. He was most cordially received by the two old folks, and kindly greeted by every member of the family he met, both white and black; for as I have already said he was a

general favorite with all classes.

In a few minutes supper was announced, and as neither of the girls had yet made her appearance, he said he supposed they were quite busy preparing for the wedding, and after supper was over, asked if he could see them. Mrs. Coffey replied, certainly, and told him just to walk into the room where they were at work. He stepped in and shook hands with my sister and then with Polly, who sat pale and rigid as a corpse, unable to move or speak a word.

"Why, Polly, what on earth can be the matter with you?" exclaimed Vardiman, himself now pale as ashes and trembling like a leaf.

She made no reply, but sunk her head forward in her work and burst into a flood of tears.

"For God's sake," said he turning to my sister, "tell me, tell me what it is that troubles your cousin so deeply," and, without waiting for a reply, started for the door.

"Stop," said my sister, and pointing to the convulsed form of her cousin, she continued, "would you try to relieve her of her trouble if you knew it?"

"I would," said he. "Tell me what I can do to relieve her, and I will attempt it at the risk of my life."

"First answer me another question," said my sister, calmly—"I know it is a delicate one, but upon your honor answer me—what was it you intended to say to Polly that you now regret so bitterly?"

"As God is my judge, Leannah," said he, "I will tell you the truth. I intended to tell her that I loved her! Oh God, if I could only have done so! I intended to offer her my hand, my energies, my life, everything, and ask her to be my wife! I stopped twice to turn back, and then rode on like a fool, and my life has been a miserable burden to me ever since."

"Would you take her now if you could get her; would you fling away all the claims of a life-long friendship, and step over the bounds of honor, which you have always held so sacred, to call her yours; would you snatch her from the first embrace of your dearest friend if you could do so? Would you? Answer me," demanded my sister, taking her cousin by the hand.

"To secure her happiness I would," said Vardiman, "but on no other consideration, not even to save my own heart's blood."

"Then take her," said my sister; "she is yours. She has long loved you with all the devotion of her ardent

soul; without you she is doomed to a life of misery; with you alone she can be happy. Take her, and what God hath joined together let not man put asunder." With that she placed the hand of her cousin in Vardiman's and hurriedly left the room.

After giving themselves time for their strongly excited emotions to subside to some extent, Vardiman and Polly, arm in arm, walked into the family room, where the Colonel was reading to his wife. The old people both looked up in some surprise, when Vardiman said: "Colonel Coffey, I came to your house to-night a miserable, almost broken-hearted man, to partake of your hospitality, and look for the last time upon the features of one whom I have long loved better than life. I have found, as much to my surprise as to my joy, that my passion has from the first been fully, though secretly, reciprocated. She has promised to be mine, and mine only forever, and I have pledged my soul to your daughter that I will love, cherish and protect her through life. I am satisfied she can never be happy with another, and we come now to ask your consent to our marriage, and your benediction upon our love."

If a thunderbolt had suddenly burst in the

presence of the Colonel and his wife, neither of them could have been more surprised. They both sprung to their feet in amazement, utterly unable to speak a word. At length, after walking the floor a few minutes, in an agony of feeling that could find no expression, the Colonel turned to Vardiman, who stood calmly holding the hand of his affianced, and said: "Oh, Vardiman, how can this be? "How can I consent to this when her troth has been plighted to your friend Pleasants! I have no objection to you. You have always proven yourself a man after my own heart, but my honor! my honor! is not my honor plighted to Pleasants that my daughter shall be his bride? Oh, do not ask me to give her to you."

And the strong man who had faced death more than once upon the battle-field without a tremor, shuddered with the intensity of his emotions as he buried his face in his hands and wept.

The silence which followed for a few moments was horrible. At length it was broken by Vardiman, who said, "Colonel, I have sworn to your daughter that she shall be my wife before the setting of to-morrow's sun, if it should cost me life. If we cannot have your consent we must be gone at once. Good-bye, mother," extending his hand to the Colonel's wife,

who had stood all the while with the air of one who walks in his sleep. The simple touching words "Good-bye, mother," although uttered by the voice of Vardiman, seemed to open all the deep fountains of maternal affection which welled up in her heart, and with a single scream she threw her arms around her daughter's neck and sobbed piteously, "Oh, do not leave us my child, do not leave us."

This restored the Colonel's self-possession in a moment, and with that promptness of decision which characterized him through life, he turned to one of the house servants and said, "Tell Ben to come here instantly."

In a few moments Ben, who was the most intelligent and trusted slave on the plantation, made his appearance with an expression of countenance that showed he was conscious his master had some important business to entrust to his hands.

"Ben," said the Colonel, "do you know where the Stanford and Crab Orchard road crosses Cedar creek?" "Yes sir," said Ben.

"Well, just about two miles above there is the house of Mr. Pleasants, and you must go there tonight. Fix yourself as quickly as possible and tell Bristow to saddle up Johnny Gladden, and have him

at the stile-block by the time you are ready to start," said the Colonel.

"Yes sir," said Ben, and hurried off to execute his master's orders.

While Ben was preparing for his journey, the Colonel wrote a sad but friendly letter to young Pleasants, informing him of the remarkable turn that affairs had taken, and advising him not to come.

It was one of those nights of inky darkness peculiar to the month of March. The sky was filled with piles of clouds through which not a single star could be seen. The wind blew in fitful gusts, now sighing amid the dry and withered grass that strewed the ground, and in a moment wailing like a legion of lost spirits among the leafless branches of the trees. The high mettled Gladden stood at the stile-blocks, pawing the earth and champing the bit, impatient for the start, and as the faithful negro threw himself into the saddle, "Here," said the Colonel, handing him the letter and a few dollars in money, "now spare neither horse nor rider. This letter must reach Mr. Pleasants by daylight in the morning. Mind! He lives about two miles above the crossing of Cedar creek, and if you get bothered you must hire some one to show you the way." "Yes, sir," said Ben, as he wheeled his

splendid horse into the road and in a moment was lost in the blackness of the night.

The morning rose bright and beautiful, the night wind had died away, the clouds had disappeared, and the sun never shone upon a prouder, or a happier man than Pleasants, or a merrier group than rode with him that day to fetch away his affianced bride; for although Ben rode his good horse faithfully and well he unluckily struck into a path that led him miles and miles out of the way, and the expectant bridegroom and his company were far on their way to Colonel Coffey's before he reached his destination.

When the hour arrived at which the guests were to assemble, they poured in from every direction until the house and yard were both pretty well filled. Vardiman and his attendants were in their room, and could be seen by none except their special friends, which was also the case with cousin Polly and my sister Leannah, who was to act as her bridesmaid.

The crowd arranged itself in groups, in which the extraordinary turn which affairs had taken was discussed in that sort of undertone in which people speak when they talk of their own shrouds and coffins. In fact, I suppose it was about the strangest looking wedding party that ever assembled upon the

earth. There was not a loud word spoken, not a smiling face present. All wore the serious, painful aspect of apprehension. No one that I know of, except myself, took sides with, or cast any reflection upon either party. Everybody liked both of them, and felt sad to think that either should be disappointed, and especially that the friendship which had been so noted between them should be interrupted; and, besides, all seemed to have a sort of vague, gloomy foreboding that if Pleasants should come something unpleasant might take place, and as Ben had not returned no one knew what moment he might arrive.

As for myself, I felt vexed at the idea of being deprived of the fun I had been so long anticipating; for I had looked forward to the wedding, and especially my trip to Lincoln, as one of the great things worth living for, and to save my life I could not help laying my disappointment on Vardiman. It did not help the matter a bit to think that the sentimental whim of my cousin Polly had helped to dash the cup of happiness from my lips; consequently I ventured more than once to express my mind pretty freely in favor of Pleasants, and to intimate what I would do with Vardiman if I was in his place. But

whether it was because they did not wish to take sides themselves, or considered me as a sort of vaporing youngster, whom it was not worth while to notice any way, I do not know. At any rate nobody seemed to pay much attention to what I said; so I went off to myself and walked about in the yard, lamenting my own disappointment fully as much no doubt as poor Pleasants' misfortune.

I had just about made up my mind to go home and unpack my saddle-bags, and take a solemn vow that I would never attend another wedding while I lived, when I observed a large crowd coming down the Stanford road, which proved to be Pleasants and his friends from Lincoln. As they rode up to the stile everybody in the yard with one accord stopped talking, and looked for all the world like the whole family was dead, or that the entire community had been suddenly smitten with a pestilence. Not a soul moved, or said a word except myself. I called to about a dozen niggers that were standing around looking like they were scared half to death, to come and take care of the horses and wait upon the guests who had just arrived, and as I stepped forward to meet Pleasants, who was at the head of the company, he saw in a moment that something was wrong, and

called out:

"Why, Riffe, what is the matter? What's the news?"

"Desperate bad," I replied, "desperate bad."

"What! "he exclaimed," is Polly dead?"

"So far as you are concerned," said I, "it would be a great deal better if she was dead; but get down, the Colonel will explain it all to you."

"For God's sake," he cried as he sprung off his horse totally forgetful of the young lady at his side, "for God's sake, tell me what has happened?"

Said I, "Vardiman and Polly Coffey will be man and wife in less than half an hour."

With that he hurried past me to where the Colonel and his wife—the saddest looking couple you ever saw—were waiting to receive him. They each took one of his hands in both of theirs, while the Colonel gave him a hurried explanation of the situation.

In the meantime I holp the young lady down, and the strange guests passed silently into the house, while the crowd in the yard stood pale and motionless, as though they were expecting every moment that something terrible was going to happen.

As soon as the brief interview between him and the Colonel had ended, Pleasants came to where I was

standing, locked his arm in mine and asked me to walk with him. After we had gone some distance, without either of us speaking a word, he suddenly stopped and asked me what I thought he had better do. I was young and hot headed, and had a great idea of settling everything according to the requirements of the "code," so I advised him to challenge Vardiman on the spot, and volunteered to bear his note. It was lucky, however, that he happened to have a good deal more sense than I had at that time, and probably knew a great deal more about the code in the bargain; for he gave me to understand in very short order that such a thing was not to be thought of under the circumstances, but after reflecting a moment he said he would like to have a talk with Polly. I saw in a second that I had been too brash in advising a resort to arms, for I could not say that Vardiman had either said or done anything involving the honor of Pleasants; so I told him I could arrange the interview, and went at once to my mother and my aunt and informed them of his request. They made no sort of objection to it, but conducted him immediately to her room, where she gave him a candid explanation of the state of her feelings towards him, which were really those of the very

highest respect, and also of the circumstances which led to the engagement between herself and Vardiman. He returned to me in a short time, and within a few minutes we were standing arm in arm in front of his former friend and affianced bride while the Rev. Ben Polston solemnized the rites of marriage between them. At the conclusion of the prayer which closed the ceremony we turned to the table where there were several bottles of wine, drank to the health of the newly married pair, and went over to my brother's, about a half mile off, to stay all night—I in a pretty unpleasant mood on account of missing the fun I had expected, and he in a frame of mind which I don't think would have been envied by one doomed to the gallows.

I slept but little myself, and as for him I don't think he slept a wink during the whole night, though I tried my best to console him several times by telling him that there were as good fish in the sea as had ever been caught out of it—a well known fact which I suppose some kind friend has brought to the mind of every man that was ever jilted in the world.

We were up next morning bright and early, and as Pleasants insisted that I should get as many as I could to accompany him home, I went over to the

Colonel's, where most of the young folks had remained over night. I found that a good many who had made their arrangements to go had about made up their minds to back out; but I rallied around among them, told them it would never do in the world to desert Pleasants under the circumstances, and offered to pay all expenses should any be incurred. I soon raised a pretty lively crowd, and in a little time we were all on the road to Lincoln, some going with Vardiman and his bride, and about an equal number with Pleasants. We traveled together to the forks of the road, where Pleasants and his party took the Hall's Gap route, and Vardiman and his friends the one leading to Stanford.

We got to old man Pleasants that evening just as the sun was going down, and the scene that presented itself as we rode up I shall never forget to my dying day. The whole neighborhood, both old and young, had gathered in, and were all standing in the yard silently and anxiously waiting our arrival. From their midst the aged couple came out, hand in hand, to meet their only son, their darling and their pride, who but the day before had left them so bright, so happy, so full of joy, to return the weary dejected victim of the bitterest disappointment that ever fell to the lot

of man. Not a word was spoken, they placed their arms around his neck and kissed him, and the three mingled their tears in silence. Nor were they alone. Not a dry eye looked upon their misery. Had their boy been brought home to them a corpse the scene could not have been more sad.

Some kind neighbor invited us in, and after we had all warmed ourselves around the bright and comfortable fire that was blazing in the wide old-fashioned fire-place, and the girls had changed their dresses, and arranged their hair and fixed their ribbons and breast-pins, supper was announced, and we sat down to one of the most sumptuous meals that ever gladdened the eyes of a hungry mortal. The old man was rich, and the old lady was ambitious to spread a feast worthy of the bride of her only son; so the table was literally loaded with everything the country afforded, that could either gratify the palate or please the eye, and that too prepared only as the thrifty housewife of the good old time knew how.

Those of us who had been travelling all day were too much occupied with the business before us to talk a great deal and those who had not were too sad; so that conversation made very little headway during the supper, notwithstanding the abundance of

excellent wine which had been provided for the occasion.

After supper the young folks all repaired to the parlor, as I suppose it would be called at this day, though at that time among the country people it would have been known as the "big room." And in fact it *was* a large room, plainly but neatly furnished, and warmed from a wide fire-place with a broad stone hearth, set off with a stately pair of dog-irons with a large brass heads, which had been scoured until you could see your face in them almost as well as in a looking glass.

The young folks from Casey seated themselves on one side of the room and those of the neighborhood on the other, and all looked as solemn as if they had just come from their grandmother's funeral.

It is generally admitted, I believe, among those who have known me all my life that, although I may have been many a time sadly in need of the more precious metals, I always had plenty of brass, and I shall always think that on this occasion I put what I had on hand to a pretty good use. Seeing that the party would prove a dead failure so far as enjoyment was concerned unless something was done to break the ice, I took my stand in front of the fire-place and

looked first to one side and then the other until the gaze of the whole crowd was fixed on me, and then said: "Ladies and gentlemen, one and all, please rise to your feet."

They all rose immediately, and I continued: "Ladies and gentlemen of Lincoln," making them a profound bow, "permit me to introduce the ladies and gentlemen of Casey," bowing to them in turn.

Both parties bowed and took their seats, and I went on, "I take it for granted that we all belong to the most respectable class of society, or we would not be here; and as this is not exactly a funeral, I don't see any use in our setting around looking as melancholy as a parcel of last year's scare-crows. I therefore propose that any gentleman may introduce himself to any lady present without being considered offensive." With that I stepped up to a very handsome, intelligent looking young lady, and making her the most graceful bow I could, said: "Miss, my name is P. B. Riffe, I was born in Casey county, and raised in the swamps of Green River. May I have the honor of your acquaintance?" There had been no books of etiquette printed at that day to teach young people how to be disagreeable under the name of politeness; so instead of taking umbrage at

what I am afraid most young ladies of the present generation would consider as little better than downright effrontery, she arose with about the air I had put on myself, and dropping me a low courtesy, replied, "Certainly, sir, with pleasure. My name is Clementia White. I was born in Lincoln county and raised among the pinks and roses of Cedar creek."

I saw I was beaten at my own game and acknowledged the corn while the company enjoyed a big laugh at my expense, the first symptom of merriment I had seen for the last two days. Determined not to be outdone, I offered her my arm for a promenade, and as we started, I asked Miss Clementia if she sang: She replied, "very little, but would be delighted to have a song from me." I told her I knew but few songs, but if she would assist me, I would try my hand on "Sister Phoebe."

"Sister Phoebe!" said she, "I don't think I ever heard of it before."

"No difference," said I, "but there is a little acting that has to be gone through with as it is sung to make it go off right, and I only want you to assist me in that."

"Very well," said she, "I will try," and I struck up:

"Oh! Sister Phoebe, how merry were we,
The time we sat under the juniper tree.
Put this hat on your head, 'twill keep your head warm,
And take a sweet kiss, 'twill do you no harm."

As I sung the next to the last line, I placed my hands as if I was putting a hat on her head, and just as I finished the last I caught her around the neck and kissed her quicker than a frog could catch a fly.

The whole room roared with laughter, and an old black woman who was standing with the other darkies, who had gathered about the windows, burst out:

"Da, now, Miss Clementia done got her match dat time!"

Neither of us cracked a smile, but Miss Clementia drew back a little and said:

"Why, I was not looking for that."

"Oh, no," said I, "I suppose not, but you agreed to help me go through the motions if I would sing you that song, and that was simply one of the motions."

This set the crowd to laughing again and the uproar brought Pleasants and his friends from the old folks' room, and no sooner had they got in than I proposed a play in which all hands could join. I wanted to ring Pleasants into something that would

make him forget his troubles, and nothing suited my purpose better than "Killy Cranky." For the information of the younger people of the present generation who have perhaps never heard of it before, I will here explain that in this old time play the ladies and gentlemen would pair off with each other according to choice, form double file arm in arm, and as they sung a song to the tune of "Killy Cranky" they marched to the music and performed various evolutions, which wound up with every fellow kissing his partner, which was sometimes slightly resisted, it is true, but still I never knew a man to make a total failure in it in my life. Very often, indeed, it was gone through with with considerable vigor on both sides.

So I proposed "Killy Cranky," and we all selected our partners and struck out. Pleasants and one of the prettiest girls in the room, who had taken him for a partner at my suggestion, in the lead, I and Miss Clementia next, and the rest of the crowd following us, two and two. After we got through with "Killy Cranky," we had "fishing for love" and one or two other plays of the same sort, all of which wound up in the same way. Pleasants took a part in all of them, and as all the prettiest girls in the house vied with each other in showing him every attention, it is more

than likely that before he got through he had begun to suspect that I was correct in the remark I had made to him the night before, that "there were as good fish in the sea as had ever been caught out of it."

Finally some one proposed that we should have a dance, when in came four likely negro fellows with two fiddles, a tamborine and a triangle, and in a very few minutes an old fashioned eight-handed reel was going to the tune of "Natchez under the hill," which put new life and mettle into the heels of the hearty young dancers, who were troubled with neither tight boots nor corsets. This was followed by the "Forked Deer," "Kiss me Sweetly," "Money Musk," "Fisher's Hornpipe," and other old tunes, which I suppose have long since gone out of date, until away late in the night, or rather I should say soon in the morning; for the chickens were crowing for day when we parted, shaking hands all round and bidding each other good-bye as though we had been well acquainted all our lives.

And where now are all who composed that party, which although it assembled in sorrow, quaffed ere it separated the sweetest cup of innocent pleasure? Some of them I never met again, and nearly all have

gone to their last long rest. Pleasants finally married and by adding to the fine patrimony he inherited from his father the rewards of his own industry and economy, grew wealthy and removed to Illinois, where for aught I know he may be living yet.

But to Vardiman and his bride, who can say the fruition equaled their impassioned hopes? Who can say it did not far exceed them? They lived for ten years prosperously and happy, when Polly passed away, and in a few years her husband followed her.

Colonel Coffey, mourned in death as he had been honored in life, sleeps by the side of his loving wife. Thus have they all gone, while I am here to be called perhaps a garrulous old man for this imperfect sketch of a single drama of their lives.

"LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM" ON THE BANKS OF GREEN RIVER.

There is a period in the life of every man, somewhere along about the dividing line between boyhood and maturity, in which he is just as certain to pass through a spell of insanity of a peculiar type, as he is to go through the process of *teething* in his early infancy. The patient feels himself suddenly inspired with a new and strange sentiment towards some one of the opposite sex, sometimes about his own age, but more frequently somewhat older than himself. At first there is a sort of delicious, dream-like ecstasy in his emotions whenever he thinks of her, for which he never tries to account, and which he could not to save his life, even if he would. He never mentions her name himself, but when alone finds a strange delight in carving it upon trees, or writing it with his own, and if he should hear it spoken by another he feels his heart beat faster, and his blood tingles to his finger ends. Everything he sees or hears calls up some rapturous thought of her loveliness,

though everything suffers in comparison with her matchless charms. The hum of bees, the song of birds, the murmur of streams, are all discord to the melody of her harshest word. The stars above him are all less radiant than her sparkling eyes, the hues of the lily and the rose blend less sweetly than the alabaster and the carmine of her lovely cheek. Even what others might consider a blemish has for him an additional attraction. If her nose should be of the Roman type, to him its curve is the true line of beauty. Though the color of her hair may approach too near a *tawny* to be pleasing to you or me, to him her ringlets are suggestive of burnished gold. If she is cross-eyed, it is not a squint he sees, but the half-averted glance of maiden coyness.

As the disease progresses the symptoms become more morbid. When absent from the object of adoration, the patient becomes the very incarnation of human misery. He loses his relish for all his pastimes, and his appetite for food. He sits in a moody reverie, or wanders about with an air of listless abstraction. He throws aside his arithmetic and grammar, and pores over "dream books" and collections of love songs. He hoards little scraps of ribbons, locks of hair, and candy verses with the care

of a miser. His thoughts are constantly aglow with poetic fire, and he feels like he could pour out his soul at the feet of his idol in a flood of eloquence; but in her presence he is as dumb as a mile post, and looks and acts as awkwardly as if he had just been caught in a petit larceny.

Should the other party, however, also become infected, the malady assumes quite a different phase. Should his passion be reciprocated, the air castles which he builds are gorgeous in the extreme. The present is a perfect noontide of happiness, and the whole horizon of the future is radiant with the celestial tints of uninterrupted bliss. It is perfectly plain to every sober mind that the poor wretch is as crazy as a bed bug, yet his whole soul revels in an elysium of imaginary joys, which for want of a better name the poets have called "Love's Young Dream"—a dream which often ends in a very ludicrous awakening, as the following incident in my own experience, I think, will show.

I was born and raised, as all my acquaintances know, on Green River, in Casey county, at a time when it was not customary for boys to be trained, from their cradles up, in all the usages of polite society, and consequently had received by education

none of those graces of manner which give a man ease and elegance in his intercourse with the gentler sex. While I was growing up, indeed, I had no inclination whatever for female society. My tastes all lay in a different direction, and my associations were all with a very different class. My sole delight was in the hardy pursuits and athletic sports of backwoods life, and I would have preferred at any time a coon hunt or a shooting match to the finest party that could have been gotten up; although the neighborhood was full of blooming, buxom girls, whose sparkling eyes, rosy cheeks and full-rounded forms it would now be worth a young man's while to go a hundred miles to see. My oracle was a negro man whom my father owned, and who will be remembered by the few survivors of his generation as a famous fortune-teller, and my boon companion a neighbor boy named Dick McWhorter, about three years older than myself, and one of the finest fellows on earth, as those who have known him through life will testify.

Just after I had turned into my seventeenth year, a gentleman named Hill, from Lincoln county, bought a farm and moved into the neighborhood; and a very short time afterwards, or perhaps at the same time, one of his old neighbers, a gentleman named Austin,

also bought and moved down. Their advent into the community was hailed with pleasure on all hands, for they were known to be most excellent citizens, and their families refined and cultivated people. They had not been in the neighborhood long before Dick began to tell me what nice clever folks the Hills were; and finally, one Sunday in the early part of April, after having repeatedly sounded their praises in my ears, he put at me to go over with him and make them a visit. I took it for granted, of course, that there were some boys of our own age in the family, whom he wanted me to get acquainted with; so I agreed at once, and over we went.

You may imagine my surprise, however, when we got there, to find no boys, but two of the sprightliest, handsomest girls you ever laid your eyes on in your life—Miss Bettie Austin and her friend Miss Polly Hill, who was over to spend several days with her.

Bettie was about eighteen, a very little above the medium size, a fine queenly-looking girl, with a handsome open countenance and bright blue eyes, that seemed to beam on all the kindliest wishes in the world.

Polly was about my own age, considerably smaller than Bettie; exquisitely formed, with a

beautifully-chiseled face, lighted up with a pair of brilliant piercing black eyes, which, to use a familiar expression of the olden time, "settled the hash with me," as soon as they flashed upon me.

Dick had the advantage of a pretty fair education, and some experience in society, and as he was already acquainted with the girls he seemed to get along first rate. He and Bettie chatted along quite freely, but Polly and I sat off without saying a word, except when I would meekly articulate "yes'm" or "no'm" to some kind inquiry or patronizing remark that Betty would every now and then address to me. The fact is Polly didn't seem inclined to push her acquaintance on me, and as for myself, although I had generally been considered a pretty forward lad at log-rollings, musters and such gatherings, I felt just about as much at home as a dog looks when he is caught in a strange meat-house.

Polly sat by one of the front windows, with her elbow on the sills and her chin resting on her dimpled little hands, nibbling at her finger nails as she looked dreamily out into the yard, and I sat by the cheek of the door, twirling my thumbs, gazing vacantly about, and occasionally stretching my arm with a tremendous yawn, like I hadn't slept for a week.

Dick and Betty finally got off to themselves, on the far side of the room, and engaged in a conversation in a sort of undertone which took their attention from me and Polly and everything till dinner was announced.

I did not feel the least hungry, but the invitation to walk out to dinner offered some relief from my awkward and embarrassing situation, and I was never as glad of anything in my life. At the table I hadn't the nerve to refuse anything that was offered me, and as the table was loaded with everything that a well-to-do farmer and his thrifty house-wife could provide, my plate was soon piled up with provisions of various kinds enough to have lasted me a week, and which I felt in duty bound to eat, after consenting to be helped to them; so I sat to work, seriously and earnestly, to clean them up. As I began to realize the magnitude of the undertaking and the impossibility of retreating from it, my embarrassment increased. My face felt like it would burst into a blaze, and the perspiration streamed from every pore; but with my eyes fixed upon the enormous pile of victuals before me, I ate on in silence, with the dogged air of one doomed to accomplish an almost superhuman feat, and determined to do it or perish in

the attempt. The dessert was ready, and the others had been waiting for some time for me to get through, but I ate on with a vigor that would have done honor to the genius of famine itself, becoming more and more confused as I bolted mouthful after mouthful, until in attempting to help myself to some new dish that was offered me I dropped my knife. I stooped to recover it, but it was out of my reach; so down I went upon all fours and crawled under the table after it. While in that position I heard a suppressed titter, and I actually looked for a knot-hole in the floor to creep through. The sweat burst out on my face afresh, and stood on my forehead in beads as big as blue bird eggs, and as I arose and wiped them off with my coat sleeve, good, kind-hearted Mrs. Hill, in order to relieve me, got up and delicately hinted that we should retire from the table, which was done, and the dessert left untasted.

After dinner awhile, Dick proposed that we should take a walk; so the girls got their bonnets, and we struck out for the river bank; Dick and Bettie in the lead, and Polly and I some distance in the rear. I was mortified to death, and Polly seemed to be thinking of something she didn't care to talk about. Neither of us said a word, but in spite of all that, I can't say I

felt like I wanted to be away from her. True, I did not try at the time to analyze my feelings, but I know now, that, miserable and degraded as I was in my own estimation, I felt a peculiar pleasure in being in her presence that I had never experienced before. The sun seemed to shine brighter, and the water in the river looked clearer because it reflected her finely chiseled face, beautiful black eyes, and her wealth of dark auburn tresses. I felt like it would be something very like heaven to bask forever in the light of her beauty, in mute admiration of the exquisite perfection of her form and features. The truth is, I was catching the disease, and catching it bad, though I didn't know it at the time.

When we reached the canoe landing, Dick proposed that we should have a ride, and I was sent off to the mill, a couple of hundred yards or so down the river, for some planks to make seats for the girls. While I was gone for the planks, Dick told the girls that I was a first-rate fellow, that my father was one of the richest men in that section, and that although I appeared green and awkward it was the result of bashfulness, and and would wear off with a little encouragement from them; together with several other kind things, which he told me of afterwards.

Whether it was from Dick's generous advocacy, or the desire to have a little fun at my expense I do not know, but so it was, after we had got seated in the canoe—Dick in the stern with the paddle, with Bettie facing him and I in the bow with Polly facing me—my little ideal of female loveliness glanced at me with a peculiar light in her eye, and sort of half-defined smile playing about the dimpled corners of her pretty little mough, that sent a thrill through me like a flash of lightning, and then looked into the water with her face turned slightly to one side, as though she had done something that maybe was not exactly right, but which she would love to do over again. It is no use talking. I was simply a gone fawn-skin from that moment. My heart must have made at least a hundred and fifty beats to the minute, a sort of delicious delirium suffused my senses and everything around me grew dim and shadowy. The mist cleared away, however, in a few seconds, and there sat Polly looking down into the rippling water with which her plump little hand was dallying, and I am sure that an angel from heaven could not at that moment have appeared to me more ravishingly beautiful. She presently looked up again with the same timid smile, and then she glanced down as she murmured softly, some

remark, to which I made some sort of incoherent reply, I know not what. She became more and more communicative, and I less and less restrained, until the declining sun warned us all that it was time to return to the house.

When we reached the door Dick, whose sense of propriety was far more cultivated than my own, suggested that we should leave, though I felt as if I would like to stay there always, at any rate as long as Polly did. So we took our leave, but not without a pressing invitation from Bettie for us to call again, which we promised to do on the next Sunday, and turned away with more reluctance on my part than I had ever felt before. I suppose we had walked full a half mile before either of us spoke a word. At length, Dick broke out in a half soliloquy:

"By George! she is a magnificent girl! Bain, don't you think Bettie is the prettiest creature you ever laid your eyes on in your life?"

"No," said I, "she ain't a patchin to Polly; she can't hold a candle to her!" and then we relapsed again into silence.

We walked no until we came to where we had to part, and then we sat down on a log, and Dick opened up to me his dreams of a gorgeous future for us both.

He was to marry Bettie the next spring, and I was to wait on him, and Polly was to be bridesmaid to Bettie of course. The next spring after that I was to marry Polly and we were to settle on adjoining farms, and be friends and neighbors through life. He was to be magistrate, and I constable—two of the most dignified positions that either of us then knew anything about—and thus we were both to live to a good old age, crowned with every blessing that human heart could wish, and—I was going to add—sink into our graves lamented as we had been honored by all who had known us; but the idea of death did not enter our minds for a single moment, and I question if either of us would have given five cents to be insured to live a thousand years.

I give, of course, but the outlines of Dick's ravishing picture of our future prosperity and happiness; the delicate pencilings, and warm rich coloring with which his fervid imagination filled it up, detained us until long after the deepening shadows of the night had admonished us to be going, when we shook hands and parted, to meet at my father's on the next Sunday morning for our promised visit to the girls.

The following week seemed to me to be the

longest one I ever passed through in my life. The minutes dragged themselves into hours, and hours crept into days, with a tardiness suggestive of eternity. I took no interest in my usual diversions, and went through my daily routine of farm work with the indifference of a mere machine. Yet my imagination was not idle for a single moment. Day and night it was reveling in scenes of unspeakable delight, of which Polly Hill was ever the bright, beautiful, radiant centre piece. Whenever I would shut my eyes, she sat before me with her matchless beauty, laved in the golden sunlight and balmy air of that lovely April evening, looking down into the bright clear water of the river, which she scattered in drops like a shower of diamonds from her dimpled little hand. Again and again did I recall the memory of that delicious thrill which shot through me like a sheet of molten lightning when she first looked into my eyes with that strange, sweet, half-hidden smile, and then looked down again. And then my exhilarated fancy would wander on, and on, painting picture after picture of our future in all the luscious hues of mutual love and domestic bliss. There were no dark shadows in any of them; they were all light, and joy, and happiness.

A doubt never entered my mind that everything would turn out just as Dick had planned it, for my unbounded confidence in his judgment, which jumped so exactly with my own wishes, was confirmed in a way that rendered his predictions as to my future as infallible in my mind as Holy Writ. Bill, our old fortune-teller, took me out behind the barn, on Tuesday while the other hands were at dinner, and very cautiously and mysteriously disclosed to me a "vision" he had had, in which he had seen me married amid universal rejoicings to one of the handsomest girls in the world—describing Polly to a dot—and that I was to be appointed constable, and everything was to be bright and prosperous with me through life.

The truth was, as I ascertained years afterwards, that Bill, who happened to be passing along on of his accustomed nocturnal tramps, heard Dick and myself as we sat talking in the woods, on the Sunday night before, stepped behind a tree where he listened to everything that passed between us, and made his prophecy correspond with the facts he thus obtained; but it was all the same to me as if he had had a direct revelation from Heaven, as I, at the time, religiously believed he had.

Sunday morning came at length, and punctual to

his promise Dick was on hand, bright and early, dressed up in his very best and all ready for our visit. I was however not yet ready. I had determined that I must be shaved; and, as I had never before undergone that operation, it was a matter of no little perplexity and trepidation to me, for I felt almost sure that if I attempted it myself I should cut my throat. Nevertheless, the emergency demanded it, and I had determined to go through with it at any risk; so I got me a stew-kettle of hot water and one of my father's old razors, and Dick and I repaired to the "loom house," where he and I, after considerable tribulation on my part, succeeded in scalding and scraping off a portion of the fuzz which had given my cheeks and chin a good deal of the appearance of a young musk-melon; after which I proceeded to rig myself out in what I considered the most stunning style.

As nothing like my dress has been seen for many years, it may not be out of the way to describe it. My shoes were home-made and of the variety formerly known as "stitch-downs," gotten up without any reference whatever to elegance either in the "fit" or the workmanship. My pantaloons were a pair of twilled flax-linen, also of domestic manufacture, which I had worn the year before, and which from

my own increased size, and their shrinkage from repeated washings, had not only become a trifle too short, but fit my legs as closely as if they had been made upon them. My waistcoat was made of home-made cotton-cloth, checked with alternate stripes of blue and copperas color, such as the women of that day wore for every-day dresses. My coat, which was the pride of my whole outfit—for it was the first I ever had, and showed that I had laid aside childish things and taken my position among the *men* of the country—was of blue jeans "dyed in the piece," and was consequently not entirely uniform in its color, being, as some of the good old ladies will readily understand, very blue in some places, and fading out nearly to a white in others. But it was the peculiar fashion of this coat which gave it its killing effect. The collar was exceedingly high, and made as stiff as two or three thicknesses of said cloth and stitching could make it. The body, or "waist," was about eight inches long, adorned with a row of bright brass buttons on either side, and the skirt which was on the "claw-hammer" or "spike-tail" style, extended from the shoulder blades terminating on a point just below the bend of the knee. My hat was one which my father had made for himself, several years before,

of felt, with a fur nap about a half inch long all over it. It was built on the "bell-crown" pattern, looking a good deal like an inverted mackerel kit, or a huge coffee pot turned up side down, for it would have held at least a peck; and being about three sizes too large for me, it would have hid my head and face entirely but for my ears and the collar of my coat which supported it.

Many of my readers will bear witness, from what they have seen and worn themselves, that there is not the slightest exaggeration in this description, and others will perhaps smile at the idea that I should have ventured upon the citadel of a lady's affections clad in such Quixotic armor; but when I viewed my "make up" in the little eight-by-ten looking-glass, before which I had just undergone the ordeal of my first shave, I made no manner of doubt that its effect upon Polly would be absolutely crushing.

Having completed my toilet to Dick's satisfaction, and my own supreme admiration, we started. But we had not gone far before it occurred to us that, in consequence of a rise which had taken place in the river, it would be impossible for us to wade it, as we had done the Sunday before; so after a short consultation, we concluded to go on horseback, and

accordingly went back to the barn to get a couple of horses. When we got there, however, the rest had all been turned out, and not a horse was to be found except an old rip called Peter, a name which the niggers had long since shortened to "Old Pete." Peter had seen better days in his time; in fact, in his earlier years he had been my father's favorite saddle horse, a post of honor in which he actually seemed to take a pride. Many a time had I seen him at a grand muster of the militia, of which my father was a Brigadier General, prancing and curvetting at the head of the column, with his nostrils distended and his eyes flashing as though he was conscious he bore the genius in all that region, and desired nothing in the world so much as the sight of some enemy worthy of his prowess. But when my father resigned his commission Peter was compelled to follow his master from the stormy paths of martial glory to the ignoble pursuits of peaceful life—a change to which his proud spirit never became reconciled. A perpetual prey to the pangs of disappointed ambition, he became moody, unsociable, ill-natured, obstinate and overbearing; and, at the time of which I write, had long been considered the most unamiable horse on the face of the earth—a perfect misanthrope, peevish,

fretful and contrary to the last degree. If he ascertained that he was desired to do any particular thing, that was the very thing he was determined not to do, unless under the most extreme compulsion; and when compelled to do it he would go at it with a sudden rush, and tear through with it in a fierce, reckless, unaccommodating style, which signified that he didn't care a continental cent whether anybody liked him or not, and that if he only had the power of speech, he would just as lief curse the hind sights off of creation as any other way. His peevishness had long been a source of amusement to the nigger boys, who were constantly playing off all manner of jokes upon him; and, if one of them just poked his finger at him, "Old Pete" would switch his tail, lay back his ears and dart at him with an expression of countenance which showed very plainly that he would like to send his tormentor to a warmer climate. With such a disposition it is not strange that he contracted a lean, hide-bound habit, which gave to his ribs and hip-bones a prominence which, with the wicked, spiteful glare in his eye, made him altogether one of the most unprepossessing beasts of his kind you ever saw in your life.

Dick and I held another short council as to what

was best to be done; and, as we could not afford to lose the time to hunt up the other horses, we concluded to take old Pete, lead him to the ford just below Mr. Hill's house, ride him across, hitch him under the bank, and let him remain there until we were ready to return. We accordingly penned him up in a corner, and after considerable coaxing, mixed with several observations and wishes not altogether complimentary to him, we succeeded in effecting his capture, and started on our way rejoicing. As we trudged along we entertained each other with our plans for the day, and our dreams of the future, until we reached the ford. There was a big poplar stump standing near the bank, and Dick sprang to the top of it with a view of mounting old Pete; but Peter couldn't see it in that light at all. He stood off just as far from the stump as the bridle would let him, and the more Dick pulled and jerked and coaxed and cussed, the more firmly Pete seemed rooted to the ground. I went off and cut me a good stout hickory, intending to give Dick what aid and comfort I could; but this only made matters worse, for old Pete had been watching me out of the corner of his eye all the time I was cutting and trimming the switch, and when I approached him he commenced plunging and

cavorting sideways around the stump, until he got Dick off, and then kept backing and backing until he had dragged him about twenty yards, when he stopped and glared around him for a moment with a glance of fiendish perversity, and then pointed his ears forward and gazed at Dick with an arch expression of malicious satire on his countenance as if he would say, "Hi! young man, I reckon you wouldn't get on me without I was willin', would you?" Dick thought he would try flattery, so he held out his hand and commenced walking slowly towards Pete, whistling, and repeating in the softest kindest tone in the world, "Woa, fellow, woa–phew–phew–phew–woa, fellow, woa." But Pete kept backing as Dick approached, just barely keeping out of his way, until Dick made a sudden grab at his mane, when he rushed away again to the full length of the bridle rein, and glared around again with a look as much as to say: "Not as anybody knows of, young man!" At this point patience ceased to be a virtue; Dick stooped down to pick up a club, and away went Pete, rearing and plunging and dragging Dick through the undergrowth and over the grubs, to the great peril of his Sunday clothes, and Dick a yelling at the very top of his voice, "Woa! d–n

you, woa! Bain, why in the h–ll don't you help me?" I came to the rescue with my hickory, but it did no good; old Pete rushed past Dick till he reached the end of the bridle reins, and then flew round facing us both again, and looked at us both as to say, "Why, why don't you get on, young gentlemen?" I crept softly up and reached out to take hold of the rein myself, but it wouldn't do. Old Pete saw the maneuver, and away he went again, thrashing around among the bushes, with Dick hanging to the bridle and I bawling after him, "Woa there! woa, you old son of a hickory! Dod blast your old skin, I'll war you out when I get hold of you." Dick and I had become thoroughly excited and clearly forgot that the uproar we were kicking up could be distinctly heard, and the whole performance plainly seen from the house across the river; so around and around we went, ripping and tearing and shouting at old Pete, until among hands we had torn up the mould and broken down nearly all the brush on a half acre of ground.

At last a new idea seemed to strike old Pete. He stopped suddenly and put his nose down to the ground, and, after a sniff or two, he gazed meekly around and stood as still and quiet as a lamb while

Dick and I both walked straight up to him. I took Dick by the foot and holp him up, and he rode up to the stump when I got on behind him. We started on across the ford, which was pretty rocky and rough, old Pete stepping very slowly and cautiously, with his eyes stretched wide open, gazind down into the dingy water and snorting at every fleck of foam and bit of trash that floated past him. In we went, deeper and deeper at every step, until it became necessary for me to raise my feet a little to keep them out of the water, when I unluckily touched old Pete in the flanks. Up went his heels in an instant, and away went Dick forward on his neck, with me after him. Our weight thrust Pete's head under the water, he blundered over a rock and down we all went together, over head and ears in the river. My hat fell off, and when I came up it was about ten feet down stream proudly riding the waves and making for a deep hole just below, so I bulged off after it, while Dick was standing about half bent, up to his waist in the river, trying to cough the water out of his windpipe. By the time I had recovered by hat, old Pete, who had regained the bank, flung his heels into the air and bursted off towards home as hard as he could split, and my attention being attracted to the opposite

shore by a suppressed giggle, I caught a glimpse of the retreating forms of Polly and Bettie, who had been standing on the bank enjoying our misfortunes until they could restrain their laughter no longer.

We waded out to the bank from which we had started in. I didn't notice Dick and don't know how he looked, but I presented a spectacle such as few people on this earth have ever beheld. The "blue dye" in my coat had not been "set well," and when the water began to trickle out of it, it ran down my linen "tights" in a number of little blue rivulets, until my legs were as striped as those of a zebra, while my breeches had shrunk from the wetting, till they fit as closely as the striffin on a stuffed sausage. The sky had become somewhat overcast, and there was a chilly east wind blowing, so it is no wonder that Dick and I made the best of our way home, without indulging in much frivolous conversation on the road. Dick started the next day to the Goose Creek Salt Works, where he obtained the position of book-keeper, and I went off to Lincoln to school; and before either of us returned to the neighborhood the girls were both married and doing well.

A COURT SCENE IN CASEY IN THE OLDEN TIME.

A MAGISTRATE'S TRIAL THAT HAS BEEN PENDING FOR THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS.

One of the cleverest men that ever lived in Casey county is my old friend, Colonel Winston Bowman, who will laugh, I have no doubt, as he has a thousand times, at the incident I am going to relate. At the time of which I am about to speak he lived in the edge of Liberty, the county seat, owned a good property, and was then, as he is now, one of the most prominent men of the place. He was as good a neighbor as a man ever lived by, if you kept on the right side of him; and if you did not, you might depend on getting a sound thrashing, unless you were a better man than he, was, which had to be settled, if occasion required by an actual trial of strength. He had formerly kept the tavern, which I had purchased from him a short time before, and his method of preserving order was at once simple and summary. If

any one was disposed to be boisterous or disorderly about his house, he simple whipped him and made him behave himself. In this way he got the reputation of being one of the hardest men to handle in the county, and had quite a following of fellows who, while they pretended to his face to be his very best friends, secretly wished in their hearts, I have no doubt, that he might meet with some one who would thrash him.

I was aware of the Colonel's reputation for strength and courage, and tried my best to avoid anything that might lead to a difficulty between us, for I did not like to fight any way, and, to tell the truth, I felt satisfied he would lick me if we ever came in collision; but I had not been a resident of the town a great while before it got whispered around that if we ever got into a fight I would be certain to whip him. There was one fellow, in particular, and a sorry sort of chap he was, too, named Pete Barton, whom the Colonel had whipped a time or two, who was exceedingly anxious to get up a fight between us, although he pretended to be a great friend to us both. He would tell me that he would bet his bottom dollar that I could whip the Colonel as easy as slipping off a log, and then he would go to the Colonel and tell him

that I had said I was a better man than he was, and would whip him if it ever came in the way.

While matters stood thus, about eleven o'clock one calm, clear day, about the middle of September, 1837, the Sheriff rode into town in charge of a somewhat eccentric, but rather trifling fellow, named Nathan Trusty, who had been arrested for hog stealing and committed to jail in default of bail in some inconsiderable amount—I disremember what now, if I ever knew. He delivered Trusty to the jailer, who conducted him at once to the jail, which, as many of my readers will remember, was a little old house, about sixteen feet square, built of hewed logs, two stories high, with but a single outside door, which was about the size of an ordinary window, and led into the upper-story, and was reached by means of a ladder, the only entrance to the lower room being a trap-door in the center of the upper floor.

Trusty mounted the ladder and went in, but the jailer found when he came to shut the door that the lock had become so rusty that he could not turn the key. So he sent for a screwdriver and, with the assistance of several of us, unscrewed the lock and took it down to the blacksmith's shop to have it cleaned; and to keep Trusty from getting out while he

was gone, took down the ladder and set a pole up against the door, which opened on the outside.

The bringing of a prisoner to jail was such an unusual thing in those days that nearly every man and boy about town, as well as those who had happened to be in from the country, gathered around to see; and while the jailer was gone to get the lock repaired, the crowd moved to the Court-house door to talk over the only notable event that had taken place in town for many a day.

While we were thus engaged, the Colonel, who had been standing some distance off talking with Pete Barton, came up into the crowd where I was, and said he had heard that I had said I intended to whip him if I ever got a chance; and if I had any manhood about me just to shuck myself and sail in. I denied having said such a thing, most emphatically, and declared that I had never had anything against him, or any cause to want to whip him even if I could. He replied that it was a cowardly act in me to say I would whip him and then deny it. I again denied it positively, but the more I denied it the more determined the Colonel seemed to believe I had said it.

In the mean time the Colonel's loud and excited language had attracted the attention of nearly every

woman in the little town, as nearly all the inhabitants lived right around the public square, and among the rest my wife, who was standing on the porch of the tavern nearly frightened to death at the prospect of a fight between us. I at length said to him, "Colonel, I will see you about this matter some other time when there are no ladies about," and walked off towards my wife. Some of the crowd said I was a coward, and some that I was too much of a gentleman to fight in the presence of the ladies; and some one thing and some another, until they finally dispersed.

In a short time an old gentleman known familiarly among us at that day as Uncle Johnny Campbell came and took a seat on the porch by me, and presently along came the Colonel. He stopped and took a twenty-dollar bill out of his vest pocket, and said, "I'll give you twenty dollars to fight me."

"All right," said I, finding my wife had gone, "hand it to Uncle John."

"Fight him," said Uncle John, "fight him, I know you both; you can whip him easy."

I had heard that the Colonel's tactics were, when he met anything like his match, to get him around the neck with one arm, throw him with what we used to call the "hip-lock," and falling upon his antagonist,

confine his attack to the face while still holding him tightly around the neck; and I tried my best to avoid it; but, in spite of all I could do, after making a few passes, he had my head under his arm, which seemed to have the grip of a boa-constrictor; but I instantly threw my arm around his neck, with my middle finger in his left eye, and in a moment he gave my neck such an unearthly squeeze that I thought in my soul it was broken. I actually thought I could hear the bones crushing under the terrific pressure. But he could not stand the "gouge," and there are but few men in this world who can. His grip loosened a little, and in an instant my head was free and I had him down. By this time men, boys and niggers had come running in every direction. They seized hold of us and pulled us apart, some claiming that I had already whipped the Colonel, others swearing that if we had been let alone the Colonel would have beaten me into bugdust, while Pete Barton said he'd "be dad-burned if it wasn't the evenest yoke he ever seed."

Amid the general hubbub and confusion our frisky little constable, who had staid out of sight until the fight was over, rushed into the crowd, commanded the peace, informed us both that we were under arrest for breach of the peace, and requested us to go

to the Court-house and wait until he could get the squire, and summon a jury to try us. The whole crowd repaired to the Court-house, all hands discussing the fight, some speculating as to what would have been the result if the Colonel had only got the "hip-lock" on me, and others maintaining that the "hip-lock" was nothing to a nimble fellow who could dodge it in an instant and fetch his adversary with the "side-wipe" or "onjint his back bone with the 'Indian hug.' "

The Squire soon made his appearance with the statutes under one arm and his docket under the other, looking like the very impersonation of judicial wisdom and gravity. The little constable bustled around among the crowd, and impaneled the jury, the witnesses were sworn and gave their testimony without either party asking a single question, and the jury retired to consider of their verdict. The truth is, neither of us cared a copper for the trial any way, for we knew that the fine would be only one cent and the costs, let who might be found in fault; so neither of us said a word for some time after the jury had gone up stairs, when at length the Colonel turning his face to one of his friends remarked that he could whip me any where, at any time and in any way, I

said he was a liar, and instantly we were both on our feet and at it again, tooth and toe nail, right in the bar. The squire shouted "order!" and fined the little constable a dollar for contempt of court; whereupon the constable "commanded the peace" at the top of his voice and seized me by the leg to pull us apart, when one of my friends shouted "fair play!" grabbed the constable by the seat of the breeches and slung him around against the railing of the bar. The jury hearing the din below rushed down the stair-way until they could get a fair view of the fight, while the Squire despairing of all efforts to restore order in court, sat turning over the leaves of the statutes as intently as if he were bent on the speedy solution of some abstruse question of law.

It was "who should and who shouldn't" between us this time, until we were separated by our friends, who were vociferating: "Dog fall!" "draw game!" "tied election!" "dead lock!" and other expressions implying that laurels were a scarce commodity with either hero in the contest. The jury retired again as soon as the second round was concluded, and in a few minutes while the Colonel and I were endeavoring to staunch the blood which was flowing freely from our respective noses, we heard one of the jurors up stairs

exclaim:

"By the holy Jehosephat! Baim Riffe is the best man of his size that ever made a track in Casey county dirt! Yes, size or no size, i-god! he can sun the moccassins of Wins Bowman the best day he ever seed in his life!"

"It's a d—d lie!" roared another.

Thereupon there was a shuffling sort of sound overhead and then:

"Stand back!"

"Far fight! far fight!"

"No man tetch!"

"Let go Jim's leg thar darn you!"

"Durn your sorry soul, you accuse me of foul play?"

"Stop, boys, stop."

"Let 'em fight!"

Such an uproar you never heard in your life. It seemed to me that forty buffalo bulls could hardly have made as much fuss. At last the thin plank partition gave way with a tremendous crash, and the storm of war seemed instantly to subside; and presently the heavy tramp of the jury was heard coming down. No sooner had hostilities been suspended over-head than the constable dashed up

the steps, shouting at the top of his voice! "I command the peace! I command the peace!" and just as he reached the stair door, he met one of the belligerent jurors, as bloody as if he had been butchering for a month.

"Consider yourself under arrest, sir," said the constable.

The juror made no reply, but gave the frisky little officer a lick under the ear that sent him spinning down the steps like a hoop, until he was sprawling at the bottom.

Next came John Hardin, a brother of Hon. Parker C. Hardin of Columbia. John had been in the melee above-stairs, and still held in his hand a piece of plank which he had wrenched off the door-facing during the affray. As he was making for the door the 'Squire called out to him, "Your verdict, Mr. Hardin."

"Go to h—ll for your verdict, you d—d old leather-headed son-of-a gun!" said Hardin, shaking the piece of plank at him. "You say verdict to me again, and I'll onjoint your neck and kick that cymlin' head of yours out o' the window!"

Thereupon, the Squire gathered up his docket and statutes, clapped his hat on and hurried out of the house, followed by the constable. The crowd soon

poured out after them, like a swarm of bees, and when all were out, I called out to them, "Come, boys, let's all go to the tavern and take a drink. My treat. Come one, come all. Come, Colonel, and take a drink with us."

He did so. We all repaired to the tavern; bowls, pans, clear, cold water and clean towels were produced in abundance. We washed the blood off, and then drank friends all round.

I forgot to say that some one, in hurrying to the fight, knocked the pole down and let Trusty out. He was the noisiest man in the crowd, and when some fellow from the country, enthused over the general amnesty which had just been declared, or by the drink he had taken, halloed out, "Hurrah for Liberty!" "D–n such liberty!" replied Trusty; to put a man in jail for killing his own hog." Just then the jailer came up and seeing his new boarder at large, and about the biggest man in the crowd, called out to him, in a tone of surprise:

"Why, Trusty, what are you doing out here?"

"Why, I came out to see the fight and hear the trial," said Trusty.

"Come, walk right back to jail now," said the jailer.

"You go on; go on, old man, and fix your lock, I'll be there directly," said Trusty.

"But you must go now," said the jailer: "I can't wait."

"Well, now, you go on, old man. I'll be dod blasted if I go till I git ready," said Trusty.

"Then I'll have to summon the 'possy cum tatters' of the county to take you," said the jailer.

"Summon away, old man," said Trusty; "but dang my everlasting buttons if I'm a goin' a step ontwell I get another drink."

"Gentlemen, one and all, I summon the 'possy cum tatters' of this county to help me take this here pris'ner to jail!"

The crowd burst into a loud laugh at this command, and to my dying day I shall never forget the half pitiful, half comical look of the old jailer, as he stood there with the jail lock in one hand and a little cedar piggin containing Trusty's dinner in the other, wondering how it was that those powerful and mysterious words, the "possy cum tatters," which he had imagined possessed more potency than the spell of a conjurer, should have such a singular effect upon the crowd before him. He turned and walked away and some one said, "Trusty, if you will go back to

Pulaski, where you came from, and stay there, you may walk off and no man shall ever molest you; but if we ever catch you back in Casey again, we'll hang you sure!"

"I'll not go a step," said Trusty; "I'd rather be hung defending my innocence in Casey than to live in freedom and die a natural death in Pulaski!"

"Hurrah for Trusty!" shouted some fellow in the crowd; "I glory in his spunk. Let's go his bail."

"Agreed!" cried several.

A bail bond was gotten up, signed by some three or four, and Trusty turned loose; and notwithstanding it would have been impossible to collect fifty cents off of the whole party by law, Trusty came up like a man, stood his trial and was honorably acquitted.

The peace concluded between Colonel Bowman and myself was sincere and lasting. From that day to this we have been the best of friends, and both of us became convinced many years ago that fighting was but a poor way to settle differences between neighbors, whether real or imaginary. He is still living, one of the most honored as well as honorable citizens of his county. He has been several times elected to the Legislature, and has served as Judge of the

County Court more than half the time since the adoption of the present constitution. May the sunset of his life be as peaceful and pleasant as its noon-tide has been useful and honorable!